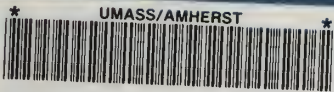


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CHILD CARE DIALOGUE



A NEWSLETTER FOR CHILD CARE PROFESSIONALS

FALL EDITION - 1997

OFFICE OF CHILD CARE SERVICES

VOL. 01

THERE'S MORE THAN JUST A NEW NAME AT STATE'S CHILD CARE AGENCY

In July when former Gov. William Weld signed the Fiscal Year 1998 budget, he approved the creation of a new agency called the Office of Child Care Services (OCCS), and consolidated all Human Services child care purchasing programs in that agency.

For the last 25 years, you had known this agency as the Office for Children, and while duties had changed through the years, in its most recent incarnation, the office was primarily responsible for licensing, training and technical assistance for child care providers and workers, as well as acting as a resource for parents seeking child care. That won't change as a result of the new budget.

What the new budget does is transfer the child care functions previously housed at the Department of Social Services (DSS), the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) to the new agency and funds various activities aimed at reaching and sustaining that goal. The majority of this funding is dedicated to subsidies for vouchers and contract slots for low income working parents, welfare reform employment services, informal child care, teen parents, families in the DSS family preservation program and trial court child care.

As the budget process wound down to its conclusion, OCCS decided to hit the ground running and started to develop a strategic plan for accomplishing the consolidation. The initial plan, which maps out dozens of tasks in great detail along with completion dates, is finished. Also, our vision and mission statement and goals for this project, developed in concert with the provider community, has been sent to the Legislature.

From a child care provider's perspective, what this all means is that the child care system used by eligible low income families will become more efficient and accessible, which can only help make providers jobs easier and more rewarding.

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Large Family Child Care

WWW.MACHILDCARE.COM

Provider Profile

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
COLLECTION

OCT 22 1997

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FROM THE EDITOR:



Well, there have certainly been a lot of changes around here since I arrived one year ago this month. We have a new name, the Office of Child Care Services (OCCS), new responsibilities and an increased budget. Also a year ago, the agency got a new commissioner. As you can see, change has been the rule rather than the exception. With that in mind, I hope all of you will like the new look of Child Care Dialogue.

Over the past few months, an ad-hoc committee met and looked at the old newsletter with an eye toward making it more reflective of

CONTINUED PAGE 3

COMMISSIONER'S CORNER: AN OPEN LETTER TO CHILD CARE PROVIDERS



ARDITH WIEWORKA
COMMISSIONER

Dear Child Care Professional:

It is a time of enormous opportunity for all of us who are committed to quality child care in Massachusetts. Our government has seen fit to recognize the tremendous contributions we all make in this field by establishing this year an Office of Child Care Services (OCCS).

Formerly known as the Office for Children, we are now greatly expanded with new responsibilities in addition to our important licensing function. The Office for Children has carried on its important work for a quarter of a century.

We are now being asked to fulfill a larger mission, to consolidate and improve the various subsidized child care programs that formerly resided with the Department of Social Services (DSS), the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS). We are happy and ready to do so with the full support of the Cellucci administration and the Legislature.

There are perhaps many questions regarding what this all means. Here are a few answers. We have a new name--OCCS--and we will be a new leader in this field. We will keep almost all of our former responsibilities. We will continue to license child care providers, as well as foster care and adoption agencies and residential programs for children. The "advocacy" function that once belonged to OFC has been legally transferred to the Children's Trust Fund. We will gain staff to administer the subsidized child care system. The staff of the new unit will come from the agencies that previously ran these programs.

Right now, we are developing a plan to bring these programs together under our agency. In September, OCCS filed a mission statement with the Legislature identifying the Commonwealth's public policy purposes and priorities concerning child care. By February, we will have completed a study of the current system to identify areas that can be improved. We will strive for a better integrated and coordinated system of subsidized child care in Massachusetts, where families and children come first, and the system's every structure will support that principle. Care must be affordable, and accessible--geographically and logistically. Inconsistencies in policies must be identified and revised. We will support providers in their efforts to offer quality care--through training and encouragement for staff.

Ultimately, we will be accountable to the taxpayers who pay for these subsidies and for our own operation of the system. It is a great time for child care providers and professionals in Massachusetts. For the last five years, Massachusetts has been named by Working Mother Magazine as one of the top ten states for child care in the nation. Now that consolidation has been placed in our hands, I look forward to working with you to make our child care purchasing system a model for the rest of the nation.

Sincerely,

Ardith



THERE'S MORE THAN JUST A NEW NAME AT STATE'S CHILD CARE AGENCY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

It is our goal to make this system as seamless as possible, so that as parents move through the system they will not even notice when the funding source for the child care they use changes.

The Legislature has given us some broad guidelines and \$200,000 to conduct a study of the way families get into the child care system and the way the state pays for those services. That study, due by Feb. 1 of next year, will look at, among other things: the role that resource and referral agencies play in the child care system; the costs and benefits of an expanded role for technology in developing a single intake and eligibility system, a centralized database to enhance tracking capabilities, multiple access points across the state to make it more convenient for families to enter the system, a coordinated tracking system for both the waiting list and vacant subsidized child care slots.

The study will also focus on current management practices in the system with an eye toward streamlining it, providing greater accountability, improving access for families and ways to reduce the waiting list for subsidized child care.

In addition to the study, the Legislature directed OCCS to come up with a mission statement.

In order to accomplish the entire consolidation, the Legislature created nine new accounts with a bottom line of \$241,582,346. Some funding in these new accounts will support the transfer of child care staff from DTA, DSS and EOHHS. They will set policy as well as develop and contract for programs in child care service administration. Others will handle fiscal responsibilities related to vouchers and contracts.

In terms of the rest of the OCCS budget for FY98, there is good news for the licensing program. In FY97, the licensing account was funded at \$5,643,369 while in FY98 the funding level is \$6,117,546. The additional money will allow the agency to fund new positions to help keep up with general growth in the ranks of providers and additional work due to the new Large Family Child Care licenses, now available. The money will also provide OCCS with the opportunity to move some of its regional offices to more suitable locations.

FROM THE EDITOR:

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the entire provider community that comes under the jurisdiction of the Office of Child Care Services. We wanted to give the entire provider community a reason to look forward to its arrival each quarter.

This issue contains information that will be valuable to family and group child care providers, school age programs, residential program operators and adoption and foster care placement agencies. We hope to be able to continue that in every issue.

As we travel down this road, there may be more changes. We are considering, among other things, a name change, increased use of graphics and photos and other initiatives designed to make the newsletter more user friendly. I welcome your comments. You can contact me, Doug Pizzi, in Boston at 617-626-2060, or fax me at 617-626-2028, or e-mail me at dpizzi@state.ma.us.



ATTENTION

GROUP DAY CARE CENTERS

Before you do any major work to bring your playground into compliance with the new regulations, please make sure you have the right information. MAX CARE has an information packet that supplements Office policy.

1-800-487-1119



BIG EVENT!

OCCS 25TH ANNIVERSARY

This year the Office of Child Care Services (formerly the Office for Children) celebrates twenty-five years of service to the children and families of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In 1972 the Office was created in order to address the growing need for child care as the number of families with two parents in the workforce increased. Over the years some duties of the Office have changed, however the mission to foster the health, safety and well-being of children in Massachusetts has always remained constant. As the need for child care continues to grow in the coming years, OCCS will ensure the health and safety of all children in child care services as well as enhance the quality, accessibility, availability, and affordability of child care to families of the Commonwealth.

ALL KIDS NOW ELIGIBLE FOR STATE HEALTH INSURANCE

MassHealth, the state's health insurance program for low income residents, has recently expanded its eligibility criteria to make more children and adults eligible for free comprehensive health care coverage.

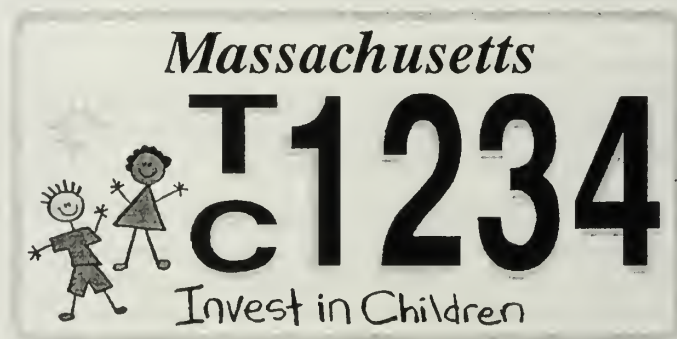
This means a family of four who earn up to \$21,348 per year may now be eligible for MassHealth. Families with income above that amount are eligible for the Children's Medical Security Plan (CMSP), a primary care program with a monthly income-based premium.

Now, no child in Massachusetts has to go without health care. Please share this good news with your clients and their families.

For more information, or to request and application, contact MassHealth at 1-800-841-2900, or CMSP at 1-800-909-CMSP.

LICENSE PLATES TO BE READY FOR SPRING

The final design for the special "Invest in Children" license plate has been approved and the plates should be on the road by March of next year. The legislation authorizing the plate passed last year. The law mandates that all funds raised from the plate go directly to the Child Care Quality Fund. The fund will be administered by the Office of Child Care Services. OCCS will give out grants to non-profit child care organizations. With this law, Massachusetts has joined nine other states with special license plates highlighting children's issues. However, Massachusetts is believed to be the first state from which all sales go directly to improving child care quality.



LARGE FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDES NEW OPPORTUNITY

After years of waiting, the Large Family Child Care regulations went into effect on August 8, 1997. The regulation development process began in January with a kickoff meeting attended by more than 100 representatives of the early care and education field, continued with intense and painstaking work by a group of early childhood professionals, was presented to the public at statewide hearings in June and finally filed on July 11, 1997.

The new Large Family Child Care rules have been combined with the Family Child Care rules creating a new set of regulations, 102 CMR 8.00, the Standards for the Licensure of Family Child Care and Large Family Child Care Homes. Following a nationwide trend, the agency decided to change from "day care" to "child care". These new regulations are available through your regional office.

Some highlights:

Qualifications: An applicant must have either:

- a. Three years of full-time, licensed family child care experience, or,
- b. Three years of full-time early childhood experience in a group setting caring for unrelated children with at least one of the three years as a full-time licensed family child care provider or approved assistant.

Training:

- a. An applicant must attend a five-hour "Introduction to Large Family Child Care" training to be eligible for an LFCC license. Register for this course through the local Resource and Referral agency. The cost is \$25.
- b. A provider must attend at least 30 hours of Office approved training within the three-year licensure period. At least five hours of the 30 must be in infant/toddler related issues.

Space requirements:

- a. The home must have at least 35 square feet per child, including the provider's own children.
- b. The space counted toward the square footage requirement must be on no more than two adjacent floors.
- c. Only one room that is exclusively used for napping may be counted toward the square footage requirement.

Number of children:

- a. A provider can be licensed for up to 10 children.
- b. Whenever there are seven or more children present, a second approved caregiver must be present and actively involved in care.
- c. No more than six of the 10 children can be under the age of two years and no more than three of those six children may be under the age of 15 months.

CONTINUED PAGE 7



EAST BOSTON CENTER IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Life at the East Boston Social Center, which houses the After School Program at Central Square (East Boston), has been hectic lately.

Managing two school-age child care centers, with over 130 students, wasn't enough of a challenge for this well-motivated, tight-knit staff so they took on some extra projects this winter and spring.

As part of a pilot accreditation project, East Boston became the first school-age child care center in the country to receive accreditation from the National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA) on June 1, 1997.

If that were not enough, the center played host to the cast of MTV's "The Real World" television series, which finished taping last June. Needless to say, this summer's dog-days provided much needed tranquility for East Boston's staff just as they geared up for their all-day summer program.

The NSACA accreditation was an eighteen-month process that began with a self-evaluation tool known as "ASQ" (Assessing School-Age Child Care Quality) developed by the School-Age Child Care Project at the Center for Research on Women at Wellesly College. The center then worked to improve in areas identified through the self-evaluation.

Anthony Manupelli, the Program Administrator for both East Boston Social Center programs, saw the accreditation as an opportunity to heighten awareness about East Boston. "Having a higher profile may help us get more federal and state grant money, and that's good for the kids," he said.

Even though the accreditation process was long and challenging, the East Boston Staff was well prepared. "OCCS' regs are more demanding than NSACA's, so all we needed was some tweaking," said Manupelli.

Enter MTV. The center agreed in November 1996 to be the host center for MTV's "The Real World" cast, which was coming to

Boston. Because they wanted this year's cast to do some volunteer work with kids, the show's producers searched the Boston for a child care program willing to cooperate. East Boston agreed to have the cast work at the center while being filmed.

"The hardest thing to deal with was having the cameras around all the time," Manupelli said. "They hooked us up for sound, so we couldn't have any private conversations."

As for the children, "after the first half-hour, they didn't even know the cameras were there," he said. The center was also showered with media attention from the Boston Globe, the Boston Herald, and several other publications.

While the cast members' ability level and dedication varied, several of the cast members were enthusiastic about the opportunity. Kameelah turned the science and craft room into a beautifully painted mural of a park, while Sean, a lumberjack, taught the kids log-rolling.

"We shipped a log in from Wisconsin, and put it in a pool," said Manupelli. Along the way, some of the staff learned how to teach log-rolling. "We kept the log...the kids love it!"

Overall, the staff at East Boston felt the experience was a positive one for the center and the kids.

"MTV donated fifty pairs of rollerblades with helmets. We could never have afforded them otherwise," he said.

Manupelli also hopes that the exposure which comes from an international viewership of over 63 million will heighten East Boston's reputation.

Now that the NSACA accreditation is final, and the Real World cast has left Boston, things are getting back to normal. The kids are being provided with a dynamic program with plenty of daily challenges. And this staff wouldn't have it any other way.

-Dylan DeVito

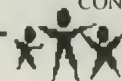
COMMUNITY BASED CHILD CARE FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

The Office of Child Care Services has completed its second year administering Child Care 2000. This federally funded program is designed to increase the availability of high quality, inclusive child care for children with disabilities in community based early care and education settings. Our second year saw a large increase in requests for our services and many more families and children served. Highlights included:

- 75 families of children with disabilities received help finding child care using a range of services including in-person support, site and home visits and connection to other community resources.
- 23 child care programs received on-site technical assistance to help them accommodate the needs of children with disabilities and maintain placements.
- 353 child care providers received training on caring for children with disabilities.

We also collected data to determine the effect of the increased level of support available to families and providers. Families indicated that assistance in finding and evaluating child care increased both the number of children in care and family satisfaction with care. Providers indicated that ongoing support and availability of technical assistance decreased fears and helped maintain placements for children.

CONTINUED PAGE 9



LARGE FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDES NEW OPPORTUNITY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

There are more specific requirements concerning supervision, adult/child ratio, use of three caregivers, and use of temporary assistants, among others. A careful reading of the new regulations will give you all the information you will need to provide this new type of care.

Applications are available at your regional offices. All applicants will receive an announced pre-licensing visit. Once licensed, the law mandates an unannounced visit at six months, as well as unannounced monitoring visits every year.

If you have specific questions about LFCC, please call your licensor.

WWW.MACHILDCARE.COM



THE NEW ADDRESS FOR YOUR CHILD CARE NEEDS

OCCS last month unveiled its new home page on the world wide web, developed in cooperation with four Newton North High School students, to rave reviews.

The page features information about the agency and its programs, child care in Massachusetts and links to child care related sites, including lists of all licensed child care providers in Massachusetts. Point your browser to www.machildcare.com.

OCCS would particularly like to thank Jim Robertson and the Plowshares Education Development Center in Newton, and members of Plowshares Youth Corps, in particular, Michael Berman, Rebeka Fortress, Stephen Pomeroy, and Nathan Tardiff. These talented students gave freely of their time worked for several months to make this page a reality.



New Chickenpox Vaccine or History of Having had the Disease to be Required for Day Care Attendance

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has announced that as of August 1, 1998, one dose of the varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, or a physician-certified reliable history of a child having had chickenpox, will be required for all children who are:

1. Nineteen months of age or older and enrolled in a licensed group day care center or family day care home.
2. Who were born on or after January 1, 1997.

Please note that the Certificate of Immunization includes a section for past history. Reliable history is defined as:

1. Physician diagnosis of the disease.
2. Physician interpretation of parent/guardian description of the chickenpox.
3. Serologic proof of immunity.

Day care and school personnel will not be making these determinations.



PROVIDER PROFILE READY FOR LATE FALL

You're a family child care provider with a masters degree in early childhood education, or, your center just received a prestigious accreditation.

Later this fall, the Office of Child Care Services (OCCS) will be giving you the opportunity to highlight these important qualifications in a way that is quick and easy for parents to obtain. Providers should soon be receiving a form to use to tell parents any information you want them to know about your child care home or center. This information will be scanned into the database and printed out on every "Provider Profile."

Similar to the physician profiles available from the Board of Registration in Medicine, our profiles will give standardized information to parents seeking child care. Parents will give OCCS the names of providers they are considering. The profiles will then be mailed within a day or so. Ultimately, the profiles will be available on-line at the OCCS home page (www.machildcare.com).

OCCS regional offices receive more than 50 phone calls a week in the "off season," many more in late summer/early fall, from parents requesting detailed information about providers.

Often parents had to wait for a return phone call from an OCCS licensor who gave the information over the phone. Although we store this information, we have not had fast access to this data.

A committee of OCCS program and systems staff, and Child Care Resource and Referral representatives designed the profiles. Following the design process, the final formats were reviewed by providers and parents. The profiles will include:

- * Provider supplied information such as:
 - Statement of purpose/philosophy
 - Hours and special services (transportation, nutrition, sliding fee scales)
 - Academic and professional qualifications
- * Demographic, capacity and schedule information
- * Founded complaint/incident history since April, 1996
- * Legal actions, if any, for the last five years

In the next fiscal year, we will begin adding all visit, and provider-OCCS interaction regulatory information to the profiles as it occurs. All profile mailings to parents will include definitions of regulatory terms, our pamphlet "Steps to finding Good Child Care", and a check list for evaluating providers.

YOU MUST REPORT CHILD ABUSE

There seems to be some confusion as to when child care providers and workers must report suspicions of child abuse and/or neglect, and who must make these reports.

Under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 119 Section 51A, anyone who is a licensed child care provider or works in a licensed child care facility is a "mandated reporter" if they suspect child abuse or neglect.

In addition to child care providers and workers, this law covers most people who deal directly with children, including teachers, health care workers, public safety workers and emergency medical technicians. What the law states is that any time any kind of child abuse or neglect is suspected, you must immediately telephone the Department of Social Services (DSS) to tell DSS of your suspicion and make a written report within forty-eight hours. During

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YOU MUST REPORT CHILD ABUSE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

business hours call the DSS area office. Outside those hours, call the DSS Child Abuse Hotline number, 1-800-KIDS-508. As a rule, OCCS advises you that it is better to err on the side of caution and report your suspicions to DSS.

Many times an abused child may be in contact with or examined by any number of these front line workers. All of these workers are mandated reporters and at least one worker from each agency that comes into contact with the child must report the suspected abuse or neglect to DSS.

For instance, you, as a child care worker, may suspect that one of the children in your program is being physically abused. You may call the police. The police, agreeing with your suspicion, may then take the child to a hospital or clinic for a medical examination. All of these people (the doctor, police and you) must file what is commonly called a "51A report" with DSS. It is not enough to satisfy the requirements of the law that one or two of those agencies in contact with the child file the report.

OCCS regulations also require that you, as a child care provider or worker, must immediately inform OCCS anytime you file a 51A Report with DSS. Additionally, you must immediately inform OCCS if a 51A is filed against you, a household member, or any person working on your staff. Finally, residential programs, foster care and adoption agencies, group day care and school age child care programs licensed under the auspices of the Office of Child Care Services must have written abuse and neglect procedures for staff to follow.

COMMUNITY BASED CHILD CARE FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

In our third year, Child Care 2000 will continue to support families and providers, using and increasing the resources and expertise of the 13 child care resource and referral agencies in Massachusetts. Each R&R receives funding from the Office to provide enhanced services to parents of children with disabilities and assistance to providers. We will continue to develop resources to bring a full range of enhanced services at all the R&Rs. Child Care 2000 has trained teams from all the R&Rs to present *Child Care in the Neighborhood: Caring for Children with Disabilities*. For further information on this informative training, contact your local resource and referral agency.



ADOPTION/ FOSTER CARE STUDY NEARS COMPLETION



Responding to inquiries from the adoption community, Commissioner Wieworka last January appointed a committee of adoption professionals whose purpose was to assess whether Office of Child Care Services (OCCS) adoption and foster care regulations properly and reasonably regulate those practices in the Commonwealth. More specifically, the committee was charged with seeing if these regulations over-regulate, and to make recommendations for change as appropriate.

The committee included representatives from some of our licensed placement agencies, adoption consultants, an adoption attorney and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS). Janet Eckler, an OCCS Substitute Care Director was the committee coordinator. Committee members included John Jackson (New Bedford Children and Family Services), Joyce Pavao (Center for Family Connections), Linn Torto (EOHHS), Alec Grey (The Adoption Center), Paula Wisniewski (Lutheran Social Services), Shirley Conway (Catholic Charities), Racquel Woodward (Jewish Family Services), Joan Clark (Open Door Society), Peter Gibbs (Adoption Resources), and Karen Greenberg (Konowitz and Greenberg).

The committee met monthly starting in March. Members completed their regulation review and sent their recommendations for the Commissioner's review.

Among the topics of discussion were clarity of the regulatory language, policy issues between OCCS and the Department of Social Services, which handles foster care and state sponsored adoptions, access of adoptive and birth parents to post adoption services such as counseling and parenting support, compensation for birth parents and procedures surrounding DSS emergency foster care placements.

The committee has sent its final report to the Commissioner for review. We'll have more about this in our winter issue.

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BOSTON, MA 02108**

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Office of Child Care Services

Argeo Paul Cellucci, Governor

William O'Leary, Secretary

Ardith Wieworka, Commissioner

The Office of Child Care Services' Newsletter is Published Quarterly

Doug Pizzi, Editor

Dear Commissioner,

CHILD CARE DIALOGUE

Massachusetts Office for Children

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
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SEASONS GREETINGS!!!

Happy Chanukah, Merry Christmas, Feliz Navidad!!! We at the Office for Children (OFC) wish you all a safe, successful and happy new year.

In the spirit of the season, we thought we would share with you some of our New Year's resolutions (goals) for 1994.

- * To renew licenses within 60 days and process license applications within 30 days.
- * To provide more affordable, accessible training opportunities to providers.
- * To create more opportunities for OFC to listen to your ideas, concerns, issues and suggestions. Working together we can overcome obstacles and provide the highest quality care to children.

LOOKING FOR TRAINING???

The winter/spring training calendars will be out soon from your local child care resource agency. If you are not on their mailing list, call them today with your name and address. If you are unsure which agency serves your town, call OFC at (617) 727-8900. OFC contracts with these agencies to offer a variety of workshops, courses and conferences to meet your needs. OFC is committed to

(continued page 3)

POLICY UPDATE

Many of our readers have commented about the release of information from their files and asked for clarification of OFC's policy to release information about unfounded complaints. The question is often phrased as though OFC has a policy that allows misinformation to be disseminated about providers. This is not the case. There is a specific law that applies to state agencies requiring the release of public records.

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COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

Dear Child Care Provider,

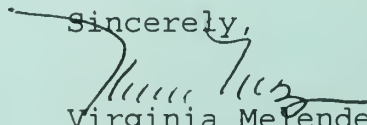
Happy holidays! I hope you found our Fall newsletter informative and useful. Many of you took the opportunity to express your candid opinions, and I appreciate that. I have attended many conferences, forums and meetings with providers to listen to your concerns.

The vast majority of providers in all types of care across the state are dedicated, hard working professionals. Many of you have suffered hardships during the recession and faced uncertainty about your careers in child care. The same can be said for the majority of OFC staff -- they are hard working professionals who have also endured difficult times during the state's fiscal crisis.

I recognize that some tension exists between providers and OFC -- some level of tension is inherent in a regulatory setting. I want to see us both work toward minimizing that tension during 1994.

I hope at this time next year we will look back at 1994 as a year that brought new levels of cooperation, coordination and communication between OFC and providers. Working together we can give children the wonderful gifts of hope, encouragement, security and an enthusiasm for learning they deserve.

Sincerely,


Virginia Melendez
Commissioner

YOUR RESPONSES FROM THE SUGGESTION BOX

Thank you
for your
letters.

As
promised,
here are
two of
the
questions
you asked. Also, we
have designed articles
in this edition to
address other issues
you raised.



Q. "My assistant and I completed training to meet the 15 hour family day care requirement before OFC changed to phase it in over three years. Will we be able to get credit?"

Anonymous

A. Yes. We developed a policy to apply certain training hours toward your next renewal. All family day care providers will receive a copy of the policy in your next renewal package.

Q. "Where do we get copies of policies that are not in the regulations?"

Anonymous

A. You can get copies of any OFC policy from the regional office that serves your area. We will continue to print new policy developments in this publication whenever possible.

COMPLAINTS

(continued from page 1)



Under Massachusetts statute, records of all state agencies (with very few exceptions) are available to the public on payment of the costs of compiling and copying the records. There is no exception that would permit OFC to delete unfounded child care complaints from the records provided to a member of the public who requests public information.

When OFC releases complaint information, the information is released only after the complaint investigation is complete. The information released includes the investigation report and the OFC conclusion that the complaint was unfounded. Licensees who provide child care under a Massachusetts license are engaged in a public activity. Therefore, Massachusetts law requires that the records of licensees must be accessible to the public that relies upon those licensed services.

OFC informs parents that as part of their search, they should visit the facility and interview the provider. We encourage parents to explore all available information and not to rely only on complaint history to make their decision.

ACCESSIBLE TRAINING

(continued from page 1)

promoting educational opportunities to assist you in your professional development and to assure high standards for children's services. The following column contains a brief sample of topics and a list of the CCR&Rs.

Child Care Focus
Northampton, (413) 586-3404
Anti-bias curriculum; Attention Deficit Disorder.

Resources for Childcare
Pittsfield, (413) 443-7830
Record Keeping and Tax Preparation.

Preschool Enrichment Team
Springfield, (413) 736-3900
Psychological Development; Early Childhood Conference in March.

Child Care Connection
Worcester, (508) 757-1503
Helping Children Through Loss & Grief; Tax Preparation.

Child Care Resources
Fitchburg, (508) 343-7395
College courses: Child Growth and Development; Parent Communication.

Child Care Circuit
Lawrence, (508) 687-1157
Food, Friends & Fun; New Games.

Child Care Search
Acton, (508) 263-7744
Drama, Games & Activities; Behavior Management/Self Esteem.

Child Care Resources Center
Cambridge, (617) 547-1063
Teaching Self Control; Violence in the Lives of Children.

Community Care for Kids
Quincy, (617) 471-6473
College courses: Special Needs; Infant/Toddler Curriculum.

Child Care Works
New Bedford, (508) 999-9930
Behaviors; History & Culture.

Home Health & Child Care Services
Brockton, (508) 588-6070
Handling Parent Complaints; Desperately Difficult Behavior.

Child Care Network of Cape Cod
Hyannis, (508) 778-9470
Tuition Subsidies; Special Needs.

Child Care Choices of Boston
Boston, (617) 542-3800
Avoiding Burnout; Laugh & Learn.

GROUP DAY CARE INFORMATION

OFC group day care regulations require that all children have an annual physical and that evidence of that examination is maintained in the child's record. The regulations also require that children between the ages of 2 and 6 have a lead paint screening test, but we do not require this be repeated annually. Note: A physician may require a child to be tested again if he/she determines the child is at risk.

OFC regulations require programs to meet special disability physical access requirements when they first open their doors and when they move to a new location. These requirements do not apply to licensed programs that are expanding space or capacity.

PREVENTION OF BLOODBORNE INFECTIONS

As providers you routinely administer first aid and it is important that you are aware of the risk of exposure to diseases found in blood and other potentially infectious material such as pus or mucus. The Center For Disease Control (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) have made recommendations to prevent transmission of bloodborne infections. If you want a copy of these recommendations, please call the Office for Children (617) 727-8900 x146.

All employees should be trained in the use of universal precautions to protect themselves against hepatitis B and other infections transmitted by blood. This means avoiding direct contact with blood and other infectious materials at

all times. Some employees may wish to be vaccinated against hepatitis B, but it is not required.

If you think you have been exposed to a bloodborne infection or have any other questions, consult your health care provider or call the Department of Public Health at (617) 522-3700 x420.

TEACHER CERTIFICATION



We are pleased to announce that the backlog of requests for staff

qualification certificates has been eliminated. We apologize for any inconvenience the delays may have caused you, and we appreciate your patience.

If you have any questions or concerns about the staff certification process, please call (617) 727-8900 and ask for our staff qualifications unit.

*Editor's Note:

Those of you who sent a letter to the suggestion box and asked for a response will receive one unless we covered the topic in this edition. Thank you for your patience.

Correction

In the Fall newsletter John Manning was listed as the Program Manager in Springfield. John is the Program Manager in Boston and Dave Michelson is the Acting Program Manager in Springfield.

ADOPTION NEWS

On November 18, 1993 Governor Weld and Lt. Governor Cellucci unveiled a new initiative, *Assignment Adoption -- A Home for Every Child*. The program is designed to expedite the adoption process and includes a proposal to spend \$6 million to expand adoption efforts on behalf of the 5,000 children under the custody of the Department of Social Services.

The initiative also calls for OFC to set aside the requirement that interstate adoptions comply with Massachusetts regulations governing allowable living expenses.

OFC conducted meetings with a number of adoption agencies and will continue to examine and implement appropriate changes to the regulations.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

- * Family Child Care Professional Development Forum Update.
- * New OFC Procedures for Policy Development.
- * New Variance Process.

SUGGESTION BOX

In the space provided on the back page, please share with us your "best practice." Is there something you think is unique or special that you do in your program? Please write to us so that we can print a few of your best practices in the hope that others can benefit from your experiences.

STATE HOUSE NEWS

The Joint Committee on Human Services & Elder Affairs recently held a hearing on a bill to increase family day care capacity from 6 to 12 children with an approved assistant. The bill generated a lively debate on a variety of child care issues including a desire by some to create a "Large Group Family Home" day care program.

We are interested in hearing your views on this issue, and we hope that **all** providers will send us a postcard or a short note with your opinions on suggested changes to the family day care structure. The bill has not become law.

Please address your comments to:

Office for Children
Attn: Chris Kealey
1 Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108.

STATISTICS

OFC LICENSED PROGRAMS

11,885	Family Day Care
2078	Group Day Care
619	Substitute Care
515	School Age Care

Please feel free to use this space for other comments if you want to address a topic other than your best practice.
Mail to:

Office for Children
Commissioner Virginia Melendez
1 Ashburton Place, Room 1111
Boston, MA 02108

OFFICE FOR CHILDREN
1 ASHBURTON PLACE
BOSTON, MA 02108

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Office for Children

William F. Weld, Governor

A. Paul Cellucci, Lt. Governor

Charles D. Baker, Secretary

Virginia Melendez, Commissioner

The Office for Children newsletter is published quarterly.

Christopher Kealey, Editor

Contributing to this issue were:

Nicki Famiglietti, Fran Barrett, Louisa Paushter(DPH), Mary Jo Welch, Jan Avallone, Karen Sheaffer and Martha Roberts.

Dear Commissioner,

CHILD CARE DIALOGUE

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
COLLECTION

OCT 19 1994

Massachusetts Office for Children

Spring 1994, Vol. 3
University of Massachusetts
Depository Copy

GREETINGS!!!

As you know, the Child Care Dialogue is one of many initiatives to improve the communication and cooperation between the Office for Children and all licensed caregivers across the Commonwealth. To that end, we are constantly evaluating the feedback we receive from you, so that we can make your questions and concerns the main focus of this newsletter to better serve your needs. Thank you for the hundreds of letters and phone calls offering your input and suggestions. Working together, we are making a positive impact on the lives of children and families throughout the state.

OFC POLICY

Many of you have commented that you want to know more about how we develop policy at OFC. To help you better understand how we work, we plan to print an article each month detailing any new policies and clarifying existing policies. We realize that problems can arise when our policies have not been clearly articulated, so we remind you to please call your licenser if you want a copy of any OFC policy or if you need a policy explained.



RENEWAL MEETINGS CAN HELP YOU THROUGH THE PROCESS



Each of our five regional offices offers informational meetings for Group Day Care and School Age Child Care providers.

The meetings, which usually last two hours, are geared for those providers about to renew their license.

(continued on page 4)

We have redesigned the policy development process. To better fit our new organizational structure, we have created a Policy Review Committee responsible for
(continued page 3)

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COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

Dear Child Care Provider,

I recently completed my first year as Commissioner at the Office for Children and I want to share some of my observations with you.

It was a year marked by achievement, progress, and some adversity. Overall, I am proud of the work we have done, and I appreciate the dedication and commitment of the OFC staff across the state. We have made significant changes at OFC and we reached most of our goals, but there is still so much to do.

We implemented a new organizational structure and a new computer system to provide even better customer service. OFC staff worked hard to get the teacher certifications, CORI checks and license renewals back on schedule.

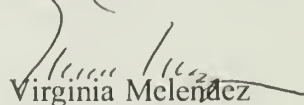
We spent an additional \$150,000 to further offset the cost of training and to make more training available across the state. Our family day care regulations were translated into Spanish and Portuguese, and we produced a family day care orientation video in both English and Spanish.

Those are just a few of the accomplishments of this year. We have already set ambitious goals to achieve even higher levels of service in the future.

I plan to continue meeting with you--the child care providers--during my second year as Commissioner. The exchange of information is extremely important in our efforts to craft policies that make sense and benefit the children and families who rely on us.

With your support and insight we can continue to provide safe and nurturing environments for all children in the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,


Virginia Meléndez
Commissioner

PROVIDER MAIL

Thank you for your letters.

Your "best practices" and general comments were interesting and informative.



"Best Practices"

"We have a monthly family night for child care staff, parents, family & friends to attend. We offer this to continue excellent communication with the families we care for."

Anonymous
Lawrence, MA

"Parent conferences scheduled twice yearly (every 3 months for infants) give the provider insight into the family, allows the parent to learn about the child's day and fosters the parent's view of the [family day care] provider as a professional."

Anonymous
Billerica, MA

"I write a monthly newsletter to parents to keep the lines of communication open. I touch on one subject from my agreement every month. I find that this keeps my parents aware of what is expected of them."

J.S.
Chicopee, MA

Thank you to everyone who sent in a "best practice." They are terrific!

DO YOU WANT TO BECOME A PILOT?

One size does not fit all. The varied and changing needs for child care in the Commonwealth reflect this reality. The OFC Group Day Care and School Age Child Care regulations have a section authorizing Pilot or Demonstration Projects to meet some of those needs. The regulations give OFC the flexibility to consider innovative ideas to permit you to offer services that otherwise might be impossible under existing regulations.



For example, two programs were created to serve children whose parents are attending to court related business. These programs give children a more comfortable, appropriate setting than the gallery of a courtroom. We granted waivers and variances of certain regulations to these programs based on the type of care they provide.

Another group submitted a proposal to care for sick children who cannot attend their regular day care or school. We reviewed the proposal and worked with the group to develop a program that meets the needs of the children they serve.

If you have an idea for a pilot project, please contact Betty Donovan at (617) 727-8898.

FAMILY DAY CARE

Because we phased in the Family Day Care regulations regarding Basic First Aid and CPR, some



providers are not yet certified to perform these functions. Providers who are not certified, must continue to notify parents how they will respond to emergencies and minor injuries. Those providers who are certified must have parents sign the permission forms which are included in your sample forms package.

Please contact your licensor if you have any questions about what is required.

OFC POLICY

(continued from page 1)

initiating review and revision of our regulations. The Committee also develops major policies and ensures that all policy and regulatory development serve the OFC mission.



In addition, there are three subcommittees in the program areas of Family Day Care, Group Day Care/School Age Child Care, and Substitute Care. The subcommittees develop procedures through input from providers, OFC staff and other interested parties. The subcommittees make recommendations to the Policy Review Committee on major policy issues.

This new system for policy development represents a shift in the allocation of resources by OFC. There now exists a standing committee to oversee policy development and planning.

Our goal is to develop policies that are well planned and reflect the needs of the children, parents and providers in the child care community.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The Executive Office of Health & Human Services (EOHHS) is looking for good ideas about managing the policy, administrative and support services for the Commonwealth's subsidized child care system.

EOHHS is issuing a formal Request for Information (RFI) about child care service delivery management. Interested parties may attend statewide forums or submit written comments. To get a copy of the announcement when it comes out, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: RFI, c/o EOHHS, One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108.

TEACHER QUALIFICATION

An article in the Winter newsletter about teacher qualification for



Group Day Care providers generated some important questions. Printed below are answers to two of the most commonly asked questions.

Where can I take the required courses to become certified? OFC accepts courses offered by any 2 or 4 year institution of higher education that issues credits or continuing education units. The International Correspondence School does not issue credits, therefore it cannot be accepted.

Does family day care experience count? Yes, as long as it is supervised by a certified Lead Teacher.

We ask that you please read the information in the application packet closely, as it explains in detail the requirements for certification. If you would like to receive a packet or have questions about the process, please call (617) 727-8900 x200. Note: Please send your application certified mail to be informed when OFC receives the application.

RENEWAL MEETINGS

(continued from page 1)

At a renewal meeting, OFC licensors highlight any changes in policies, regulations and procedures. Much of the two hour meeting is devoted to questions and answers.



The feedback from providers who have attended the meetings has been extremely positive. They found that it made preparing for a renewal study much easier, and it was a good opportunity to network and share ideas.

Please take advantage of these meetings by contacting your licensor or the regional office that serves your area to find out when the next meeting is scheduled.

OFC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SURVEY & TRAINING SCHOLARSHIP

OFC will be awarding training scholarships of up to \$100 for a workshop, conference or course to some of those who respond to the survey.

To have a chance to win, please complete the enclosed professional development survey and return it to OFC **by April 19**. Winners will be chosen at random. Caregivers at all levels are encouraged to return the survey in order to give OFC's Professional Development Advisory Group an accurate picture of training needs across the state.

Thank you and good luck!

Special thanks to the members of the Professional Development Advisory Group and Child Care Careers Institute who helped develop the training survey.

SURVEY FOR FAMILY, GROUP DAY, AND SCHOOL AGE CARE PROFESSIONALS

Directors: Please copy and distribute to your staff

1. Profession/Position (check one):
 - ☐ Prof. Child Care Provider
 - ☐ Fam. Child Care Home Visitor
 - ☐ Director (center or school age)
 - ☐ Assistant Director
 - ☐ Education Coord.
 - ☐ Family Worker
 - ☐ Lead Teacher
 - ☐ Teacher
 - ☐ Assistant Teacher
 - ☐ Other: _____
2. In what type of child care program do you work (check one):
 - ☐ Family Child Care (Independent)
 - ☐ Family Child Care (System: _____)
 - ☐ Early Childhood Center-based (Full day)
 - ☐ Nursery School
 - ☐ School-Age
 - ☐ Other: _____
3. For how many years have you worked in paid professional child care (if less than one year, how many months): _____
4. What types of training have you completed in the last 12 months, and how was the training paid for (check as many as apply):

Type of Training	Self	Agency	Grant/ Scholarship	Free	Other
Orientations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conferences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
College Courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On-Site Training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Home-based Study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What were your reasons for attending training (please rank as many as apply, using 1 for the most important reason):

 - ☐ OFC requirements
 - ☐ Required by Employer
 - ☐ To Complete Educational Credentials
 - ☐ Career Advancement
 - ☐ Personal Interest

6. What training do you need in the next 12 months (check as many boxes as appropriate):

	For OFC Requirements	For Other Reasons
Child Growth & Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning for Learning Environments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child Behavior Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children with Special Needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Infant & Toddlers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
First Aid and CPR	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relationship with Families	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Day Care Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supervision or Staff Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Program Operation and Administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. In what other areas are you interested in obtaining training ?

(more questions on other side)

- Esta encuesta está disponible en Español. Por favor marque el cuadro correspondiente, si usted desea recibir una copia en Español. Escriba su nombre y dirección en el espacio indicado y envíe esta forma a la persona que aparece en la parte de abajo.
- Este estudo se encontra disponível também em Português. Se você quiser receber uma cópia do mesmo em Português, preencha o quadrado ao lado, escreva seu nome e endereço e em seguida envie este formulário endereçado à pessoa indicada abaixo.
- Gen ankêl sa an Kireol tou. Si ou ta remmen reswa youn kopl an Kireol, tan pí tcheke ti Kireol sa, ekri non out ak adrès ou anba_a, epl voye fòm nan by moun ke non Jekri an ba fòm nan.
- 中文: 這份調查表有中文版本, 如果你有興趣想要一份, 請在旁邊的西方格注上 V, 並將你的名字和地址填好, 寄回給表格底下的地址。
- Nếu cần bản sao để xem qua. Xin đừng dấu vào ô vuông nhỏ bên góc phải. Kèm theo họ, tên cùng địa chỉ, gửi quý vị như dưới đây. Vả gửi đến người mà tên và địa chỉ được liệt kê nơi phần cuối của mẫu đơn này.

Name & Address/Nombre y Dirección/Nome e endereço/non ou ak adrès/ 姓名和地址及其它.
 Ho tên và địa chỉ của quý vị:

Send to/Envíe a/Destinatário/ 寄本地址: /Gửi về người nhận:
 Jan Anderson Avallone Office for Children 1 Ashburton Place Boston

8. What training format(s) are you most interested in (check as many as apply):

- ☐ Workshops
☐ Conferences
☐ College Courses
☐ On-Site Training
☐ Home-based Study
☐ Other: _____

9. What has stopped you from getting this training in the past (please rank as many as apply, using 1 for the most important reason):

- Cost _____
Lack of time _____
No training at a site close to me _____
No transportation _____
No training in my language _____
No training offered in topics I'm interested in _____
Level of training too high for me _____
Level of training too low for me _____
Courses were full _____
Other: _____

OFC TRAINING SCHOLARSHIP LOTTERY

This ticket is for lottery purposes only; your answers to the survey questions will be separated from the ticket and will be kept confidential.

Everyone who returns this survey is eligible for the lottery. The Office for Children will draw 50 names from those people who complete the survey. Each winner will receive a scholarship for the cost of a training session up to \$100.

RETURN THIS SURVEY BY APRIL 19 FOR ENTRY IN THE LOTTERY

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

The rest of the questions in this survey help us understand more about the people who complete this survey. While the questions are optional, we would appreciate your help in collecting as much information as possible so that we can improve the quality of training offered to child care professionals.

10. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

11. What languages do you speak fluently (check as many as apply; circle your primary language):

- ☐ English ☐ Vietnamese
☐ Spanish ☐ Khmer
☐ Portuguese ☐ Haitian Creole
☐ Cantonese ☐ French
☐ Mandarin ☐ Italian
☐ Taiwanese ☐ Other: _____

12. What is your fluency level in English (check one):

- ☐ Limited
☐ Fair
☐ Good
☐ Excellent

13. Please check the grouping that applies to you:

- ☐ White/Caucasian ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
☐ African-American/Black ☐ Portuguese
☐ Latino/Hispanic ☐ Other: _____

14. What is your highest level of education? If your degrees are from schools outside the US, use equivalent (check one):

- ☐ GED ☐ AA/AS Degree
☐ High School Diploma ☐ BA/BS Degree
☐ Certificate ☐ MA/MS Degree
☐ CDA ☐ Doctorate
☐ Other: _____

15. How many hours per week are you employed in paid professional child care? _____

16. What is your annual income from professional child care (before taxes)?

- ☐ under \$13,000 ☐ \$25,000 - \$29,999
☐ \$13,000 - \$19,999 ☐ \$30,000 - \$39,999
☐ \$20,000-\$24,999 ☐ over \$40,000

Please return this survey to: **Office for Children, One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108.** Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

Did you work during 1993 and did your family earn less than \$23,050? Did a child live with you for at least half the year?



If so, you may be eligible for up to \$2,364 from the Earned Income Credit. It's a federal benefit for both married and single parents who worked either full or part time during part or all of the year.

Getting your Earned Income Credit takes just two simple steps:

- 1) File a federal income tax return.
(Form 1040A or 1040, not 1040EZ)
- 2) Fill out "Schedule EIC" and attach it to your tax return.

If you're eligible, you'll either owe less in taxes, or the government will mail you a check. You can get the Earned Income Credit even if you don't owe income tax.

To receive an IRS fact sheet (available in Spanish), please call (617) 727-8900 x136.

Thanks to Mav Pardee at Work & Family Matters.

During the past year we have seen the number of licensed family day care homes drop from 13,526 to 11,356. We have cleaned our database of many who are no longer caring for children which accounts for part of the decrease. We would appreciate your views about the decrease in family day care.

FAMILY DAY CARE TASK FORCE

The Office for Children convened a task force to study suggested changes in family day care capacity above the existing number of six children. The task force is examining issues related to a potential increase and will report its findings to the Commissioner.

The task force is composed of experts in the child care field and it is representative of the various interested groups. Family day care providers and group day care providers are on the task force.

The numerous letters and post cards you sent will help us as we study this difficult and controversial subject.

We will keep you informed on the developments of the task force.

STATISTICS

OFC LICENSED PROGRAMS

11,356	Family Day Care
2084	Group Day Care
620	Substitute Care
513	School Age Care

Any comments on other topics are appreciated as well.

Mail to:

Office for Children
Attn: Chris Kealey
1 Ashburton Place, Room 1111
Boston, MA 02108

OFFICE FOR CHILDREN
1 ASHBURTON PLACE
BOSTON, MA 02108

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Office for Children

William F. Weld, Governor

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Virginia Melendez, Commissioner

The Office for Children newsletter is published quarterly.

Christopher Kealey, Editor

Contributing to this issue were:

Jerry Curley, Fran Barrett, Mary Jo Welch, Jan Avallone, Nancy Wilber and Mav Pardee.

Dear Commissioner ,

CHILD CARE DIALOGUE

Massachusetts Office for Children

Fall 1994, Vol. 5

GREETINGS

Welcome back to those of you who had the summer off from child care. This edition marks the first anniversary of the Child Care Dialogue. It was one year ago this month that OFC published the first edition of our newsletter designed to expand the dialogue between OFC and the child care community.

We have heard from hundreds of you who have written to us through the Suggestion Box, as well as many who have called to share your views on various issues.

Thank you all for your comments and most importantly for your willingness to work closely with us to ensure children have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

GROUP CHILD CARE

It has come to our attention that many child care centers are pursuing accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). We applaud and support those of you who choose to become accredited as it is an important indicator of dedication and commitment to excellence in child care.

Part of the accreditation process includes a site visit to the center by NAEYC validators. Children's records are among the many items reviewed by the validators. It is important to remember that our regulations require that
(continued page 3)

OFC POLICY

*NEW SUBSTITUTE
CARE LICENSING
POLICY FOR
GROUP CARE
PROGRAMS
SERVING PREGNANT AND PARENTING
TEENS*



A three year effort involving substitute care providers, community advocates, legislators and OFC staff resulted in a new policy for licensing of programs serving pregnant and parenting teens.

OFC recognizes that pregnant and parenting teen programs face some issues which differ from other group care facilities. In light of these differences, OFC thoroughly reviewed the regulations for group care facilities and their applicability to pregnant and parenting teen programs.

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COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

Dear Child Care Professional,

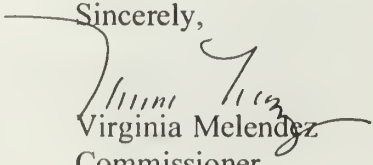
I hope you had a wonderful summer. The end of summer signals the beginning of one of the busiest times of the year for OFC and many providers as well. As we enter our busiest season, we must remain focused on our goals and commitment to quality services.

Let me share with you some exciting projects we are working on at the Office for Children:

- To make the required training more available and affordable, we are training child care providers to be trainers.
- To foster cooperation and coordination of all those in the child care community, OFC is sponsoring more than 25 conferences statewide.
- To identify parent needs and barriers to attaining services, OFC is conducting parent focus groups.
- To guide parents, we are publishing a new brochure explaining child care options and the importance of licensed care.
- New family child care application and renewal package; regulations will soon be available in six languages.
- Announced proposed changes to OFC adoption regulations and policy; improving the adoption process will remain a top priority.

There is still a great deal of work to be done, and we are committed to meeting the changing needs of children, parents and providers. We appreciate your continued suggestions and support.

Sincerely,


Virginia Melendez
Commissioner

PROVIDER MAIL

Thank you for your letters. Below is a sample of your letters from the summer suggestion box.



"I noticed in your newsletter you are still using "Day care." We find that "Child care" sounds more respectful."

K. S.
Canton

Editor: You make an excellent point. "Day care" is the phrase used by the law, but we will use "child care" wherever possible.

"I care for six children. The problem arises on snow days when the two children I care for after school [are there the full day]. I think the quota should be changed.

"Arlington Day Care Mom"

Editor: A change in the number of children allowed in a family child care home can only occur through legislation. OFC is examining a number of suggested changes.

"Had I been aware of the regulations governing day care, I would have been more comfortable seeking day care services and more motivated to seek a licensed provider."

R.C.
Fitchburg

FAMILY CHILD CARE

SYSTEMS

We have received a number of calls from providers working for family child care systems that point to a need for greater clarity. It appears that some systems providers confuse the administrators of a system with the Office for Children.

As part of a contract with a system providers often receive help finding children, keeping records, communicating with parents, and interpreting OFC regulations and policies.



It is the last of these examples that is of some concern to us. OFC policies and regulations are not set in stone. They continuously evolve to meet the changing needs in caring for young children. OFC licensing specialists can often help providers find creative solutions to problems. If you have any questions about policies, please contact your licensor in the office that serves your area or contact our central office at (617) 727-8900.

GROUP CHILD CARE (NAEYC) (continued from page 1)

the information in children's records be maintained under standards of confidentiality unless the express written permission of parents is obtained.

Congratulations to all who have successfully completed the accreditation process.

OFC POLICY

SUBSTITUTE CARE LICENSING POLICY (continued from page 1)



Some regulations do not apply to the majority of pregnant and parenting teen programs. OFC has developed a written policy and standard variance procedures to support the mutual interest of OFC and providers in protecting the health and safety of mothers and children in care.

The policy clarifies issues around licensing applications, program administration, visits, mail and telephone policies, runaway policies, transportation, buildings and grounds, living units, records, information for parents, family work, health services, educational services, recreational services, staff:child ratios, mixing children and adults, clothing, grooming and hygiene, nutrition, and behavior management. Standard variance procedures for several regulations assist providers with extenuating circumstances.

On June 16, 1994, OFC sponsored a training to familiarize providers and licensing staff with the new policy. In addition to the policy training, participants discussed trends and issues in programs serving pregnant and parenting teens, the history of the Massachusetts policy development initiative, and questions from providers.

For additional information regarding this new policy, please contact a substitute care licensing specialist in the regional office that serves you.

**OFFICE FOR CHILDREN
CELEBRATES CHILD
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATES**



CDAs recognized at State House

Recipients of Child Development Associate (CDA) credentials gathered at the State House this summer to be recognized for their outstanding achievement.

Health & Human Services Secretary Charles D. Baker and OFC Commissioner Virginia Melendez presented certificates of recognition and CDA pins to caregivers who have completed the CDA credentialing program since 1991.

The CDA program is a major national effort to credential qualified caregivers who work with children from birth to age five.

The State House event was a celebration of the hard work and dedication demonstrated by caregivers across the state who have earned CDA credentials. Congratulations!

Note: OFC offers needs based scholarships for the CDA program. If you would like more information, please send your name and address to CDA Scholarship, Office for Children, One Ashburton Place, Rm. 1111, Boston, MA 02108.

SAFETY TIPS

*** Kitchen Safety**

Recently, OFC recorded two serious burn incidents that could have been prevented.

1. Turn pot/pan handles away from the edge of the stove.
2. Keep coffee/tea cups well out of reach of children.
3. Be aware of where all children are when removing hot food from the stove and warn the children in advance that a danger exists.

*** Halloween**

1. Costumes should be non-flammable and not a tripping hazard.
2. Extra care should be taken with jack-o-lanterns.

*** Fire Prevention**

Re-check your evacuation plan. Be sure that exits are clear and children can use the exits alone if need be. Make sure new children know the plan and that everyone knows the meeting spot outside.

*** Gain a New Perspective**

Get down on your hands and knees to really see what children see. Be certain no small, chokeable items are within reach. Be certain all telephone and electrical cords are out of reach. Make sure all cabinets and drawers containing hazards are inaccessible.

CARING ABOUT THE CAREGIVER

Office for Children plans to issue a report in October entitled, "Caring about the Caregiver: A Report on Massachusetts Professional Development in Early Care and Education." This report compares the status of professional development efforts in Massachusetts to states across the country. The report recommends the creation of a Massachusetts Professional Development System that builds upon existing elements of professional development and identifies new ways to further professionalize the child care field.

The Office for Children will act as the conduit for planning and promoting access to services from various agencies for this strategic initiative.

Some recommendations contained in the report include:

- Develop interrelated credentials among state agencies to sequence as career development for progressively more demanding roles in the field.
- Office for Children and Department of Education work with higher education to make necessary changes to implement concept of career development.
- Create an optional family child care provider qualification and begin a credentialing project that records providers in a personnel registry and issues certificates.
- Develop and issue a recommended standard of compensation for all programs and encourage creative mechanisms to fund salaries by role, length of service, and level of education.

- Publicize the importance of early childhood knowledge and skills and the relationship between quality in child care and a professional development system.
- Continue interchanges with parents through OFC about their needs and concerns regarding early care and education for their children.

If you are interested in receiving a full copy of the report, please contact Jan Anderson Avallone at (617) 727-8900 x 146.

HOME TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

The Massachusetts Institute of Continuing Education & Training offers Home Study Courses for child care providers. Each course offers the equivalent of five training hours approved by the Office for Children and accredited by the N.C.E.C.P. Many new courses are under development. Cost \$39.95 per course. For more information, call 1-800-294-4944.

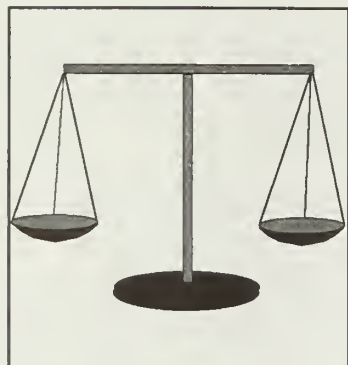
NEW DIRECTORY AVAILABLE

OFC has developed a Behavioral Management Training Services Directory available at no cost. This statewide resource guide lists over 50 skilled professionals who can help parents and providers work more effectively with young people diagnosed with special needs who present challenging behaviors.

The directory offers valuable information about who you can contact in your area and includes a cross reference index. To get a copy of the directory, please call (617) 727-8957.

FAMILY CHILD CARE - NEW POLICY

On July 1st, OFC issued a revised informal care policy defining home based caretaking relationships that are exempt from



family child care licensure. The new policy is more specific and much clearer than prior policy. It defines when care is provided on a "regular basis." It describes occasional care and informal cooperative arrangements among neighbors or relatives that are exempt.

Whether an exemption applies is determined by the Office for Children. To do so, OFC reviews the child care being provided to determine whether care is provided on a regular basis and if so, whether it is an informal cooperative arrangement or the occasional care of children.

Family child care meets the "regular basis" standard and is subject to licensure if the family day care operates for more than one day per week and more than eight weeks in a twelve-month period. To operate on a regular basis, a family child care home must meet both of these requirements. Child care that does not operate on a regular basis is not subject to licensure.

OFC defines occasional care by determining the duration of care provided to each child. Occasional care occurs when:

- no child is present more than one day a week or 8 hours total for a week.

OR

- no child is in care for more than 30 days from the initial day of placement.

Informal Cooperative Arrangements among neighbors or relatives are exempt from licensure. The criteria used to define informal cooperative arrangement are very detailed.

If you want to know more about this policy, please contact the regional office that serves you to obtain a copy. If you have any specific questions about this or any policy, please consult with your OFC licensor.

OFC LICENSED PROGRAMS

(statistics as of August 1994)

Family Day Care

#	10,687	Total Capacity	55,936
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Group Day Care

#	2087	Total Capacity	89,028
---	------	----------------	--------

School Age Care

#	490	Total Capacity	19,933
---	-----	----------------	--------

Substitute Care (Shelter & Group Care only)

#	630	Total Capacity	6,373
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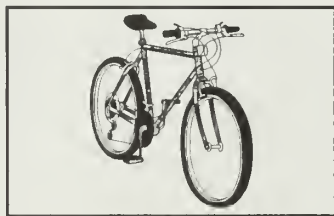
THE MASSACHUSETTS BICYCLE HELMET LAW

In March 1994, Massachusetts enacted the bicycle helmet law, M.G.L. Ch.85, Sec.13A. The law states that "any person twelve years of age or younger operating a bicycle or being carried as a passenger on a bicycle on a public way, bike path or on any other public right-of-way must wear an approved helmet.

Children under one year old must not be transported on a bicycle. Helmets must fit well and be secured by straps when the bicycle is being operated.

For more
information
contact:
Massachusetts
Department
of Public
Health

Injury Prevention and Control Program
150 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02111



APPROVED ASSISTANTS IN FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES

Many family child care providers can attest to the importance of having high quality, approved assistants to help them care for six children.

Because a significant number of providers have come to rely on approved assistants, it is important to remember that prior to employing an assistant, providers must contact their local OFC office to confirm the status of a prospective assistant.

Also, it is important that providers maintain an accurate log of their use of approved assistants. This log may be reviewed during a licensing visit.

Occasionally, OFC is forced to suspend or revoke the certification of an assistant. For your protection and that of the children, it is imperative that you confirm their credentials with us before hiring someone.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

* Expanded project with WGBH.

* New family child care application.

* Parent focus group report.

SUGGESTION BOX

We are continuously searching for ways to increase the efficiency of the license renewal process. Our licensors work hard to ensure that there are no gaps in licensure. Currently we mail notices to providers at least 90 days prior to the date of expiration. Please send us your ideas on ways to make the process better.

As always, any comments on any topics are welcome and appreciated.

Please mail comments to:
Office for Children
Attn: Chris Kealey
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

OFFICE FOR CHILDREN
1 ASHBURTON PLACE
BOSTON, MA 02108

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Office for Children

William F. Weld, Governor

Argeo Paul Cellucci, Lt. Governor

Charles D. Baker, Secretary

Virginia Melendez, Commissioner

The Office for Children newsletter is published quarterly.

Christopher Kealey, Editor

Contributing to this issue were:

Jerry Curley, Etta Davis, Nicki Famiglietti, Marcia Farris, June Babel, Phil Baimas, Anne Moniz, Jack Miller, Debbie Phillips and Jan Avallone.

Dear Commissioner ,

CHILD CARE DIALOGUE



OFFICE FOR CHILDREN

DOCUMENTS COLLECTION
UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
AMHERST, MA 01003

WINTER 1994, VOL. 6

GOVERNOR APPOINTS NEW CABINET SECRETARY

Governor William Weld and Lt. Governor Paul Cellucci named Health and Human Services Secretary Charles D. Baker as the new Secretary of Administration and Finance. They announced that Wisconsin Secretary of Health and Social Services Gerald Whitburn will serve as the state's new Health and Human Services Secretary beginning in January. Assistant Secretary Susan L. Costello is serving as Acting Secretary pending Mr. Whitburn's arrival.

Secretary Baker was the architect of the state's managed care Medicaid program and served as the Governor's chief policy adviser on all health and human service issues including the child care system.

Susan L. Costello has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to improve the quality of services to children and families and make state government more efficient.

We appreciate the tremendous contributions of both Secretary Baker and Acting Secretary Costello.

We welcome the arrival of Gerald Whitburn, whose efforts as head of Wisconsin's Department of Health and Social Services have earned national recognition. We look forward to working with him to strengthen the services available to children and families throughout the Commonwealth.

ATTENTION ALL PROVIDERS IN OFC REGION 3

The Office for Children regional office currently located in Peabody is moving to Beverly. A tentative date of January 30, 1995 has been set for the move. The new mailing address will be:

Office for Children
Beverly Regional Office
66 Cherry Hill Drive
Beverly, MA 01915

We will inform those affected by the move of new phone numbers and other relevant changes as soon as the information becomes available. In the meantime, please use the current telephone numbers for Peabody.

Thank you for your patience during the transition.

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COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

Dear Child Care Professional,

I want to wish each one of you a safe and joyous holiday season. I hope the new year will be filled with success and fulfillment.

During the past year, reforming the state's welfare system has been widely debated. Most agree that increasing the availability of child care is an essential cornerstone of welfare reform.

A likely result of welfare reform will be a large increase in demand for child care across the Commonwealth. For this reason we are asking you as a provider to please inform us about the number of openings you have and if you have the ability to expand your program to meet an increased demand. In this issue we are surveying group and school age care. At a later date, we will survey family child care as well.

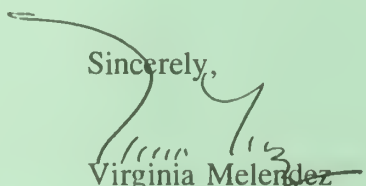
Please take a few minutes to answer the survey on pages five or six of this newsletter. Please mail your response to us as soon as possible.

With your help we can begin to get a more accurate picture of the steps necessary to meet the growing needs for child care in our state. We want to know what specific barriers you think may directly hinder your ability to expand.

We are continuing to work with the state legislature on a law change to increase the capacity for eligible family child care providers.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to our request for information.

Sincerely,


Virginia Melendez
Commissioner

PROVIDER MAIL

Thank you
for your
letters. Below is a
sample of your
letters from the
Fall suggestion
box.



"I have a question about the five hours of training. Could my involvement as co-chairperson of a school advisory council be counted as training time?" *L. A., Somerville*

Editor: It depends on the material covered during the meetings. We encourage all providers with questions about training requirements to contact your licensors to discuss your specific situations.

"At most of the conferences I have been to I have learned many ideas and made many friends. I would like to ask you to continue to sponsor these." *C. M., So. Easton*

Editor: We will continue to sponsor conferences so that affordable, accessible training will continue to be available across the state.

"Each year I wade through an inch thick stack of papers to glean out changes in regulations that affect license renewal for our Day Care and School Age Programs." *J. F., Mansfield*

Editor: Our School Age Care/Group Day Care Policy Subcommittee is examining ways to reduce the paperwork.

SEASONS GREETINGS

We at the Office for Children want to wish you all happy holidays and a safe, successful new year.

LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

Governor Weld and Lt. Governor Cellucci filed legislation in November to streamline the state's adoption process by limiting the rights of unwed fathers who fail to establish paternity, maintain contact with their child or provide child support. The Office for Children assisted in drafting the legislation and will continue to work on the bill.



OFC has also filed two bills for consideration in the 1995 legislative session.

The first, "An Act to Provide the Office for Children Access to Juvenile and Sealed Criminal Records of Prospective Adoptive Parents," would grant OFC access to the same CORI data about adoptive parent applicants that DYS and DSS have.

The second bill is "An Act to Improve Family Day Care Services." This bill would permit OFC to increase the maximum number of children that may be cared for in a family day care home. The bill sets a maximum of nine children. Under the bill, OFC would issue new regulations to set additional requirements for providers caring for more than six children.

PUBLIC HEARINGS ON FAMILY CHILD CARE REGULATIONS

The Office for Children plans to amend several of the family day care regulations. The major amendment being proposed affects the term of a license.

The proposed amendment would enable OFC to amend a license after a change of address, reflecting the amount of time left on the license, without requiring another fee or redundant documentation. Currently, when a provider moves, she/he is required to submit a new application including a new fee and documentation, regardless of the amount of time left on their existing license.

Several other amendments are currently being drafted for inclusion in the public hearing process. The final drafts will be available for public distribution on January 6, 1995.

Two public hearings have been scheduled so we can hear your comments regarding the proposed regulation changes. The first hearing will be held on January 30, 1995, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., at UMASS Boston. The second hearing will be held on February 1, 1995, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., at Worcester Public Library.

Please contact Debbie Phillips at (617) 727-8900 x158, after January 5, 1995, to obtain a copy of the proposed changes and directions to the public hearings. Written comments will be accepted through February 6, 1995. Anyone requiring special accommodations must notify us no later than 5:00 p.m. on January 25, 1995.

OFC OFFERS CHILD DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE SCHOLARSHIPS

OFC continues its commitment to the professional development of caregivers through a variety of free or low cost training programs.

Scholarships are available to eligible providers who want to take part in the voluntary Child Development Associate (CDA) credentialing program. The CDA program is a major national effort to credential qualified caregivers who work with children from birth to age five.

If you would like more information, please send your name and address to CDA Scholarship, Office for Children, One Ashburton Place, Rm. 1111, Boston, MA 02108.

BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT TRAINING SERVICES DIRECTORY

In September 1994 the Office for Children released a service directory entitled, "Behavioral Management Training Services in Massachusetts." This 15-page resource guide lists over 50 behavioral trainers and consultants in 5 regions across the state.

The demand for the directory from service providers and parents has been tremendous. In the first month it was available, OFC distributed more than 1,200 copies and the directory is currently in its second printing!

If you would like a copy, please call (617) 727-8957.

HOW TO BEAT CABIN FEVER -- TIPS FROM LICENSING SPECIALISTS

If last winter was any indication of what we can expect this year, then we are in for a long season spent mostly indoors. This presents a challenge to providers to come up with alternative activities when the weather does not permit outdoor play.

Many providers have written to us expressing their appreciation for the efforts of licensors who have assisted them or offered helpful suggestions from their experience.

Below are some thoughts on how to beat cabin fever during the winter and some safety reminders.

- ★ It can be difficult to find the motivation to take the children out in the colder weather. But going out for a short period of time can relieve stress and it can be fun if you make getting ready into a game.
- ★ Remind parents to bring extra clothing -- especially hats and mittens. You may want to seek out an organization like Goodwill and purchase some extra hats and mittens for the times when parents forget.
- ★ Have an indoor picnic or a beach day where children could pretend they are at the beach.
- ★ Be certain to keep the decks, stairs and play spaces shoveled and clear of dangerous ice.
- ★ Use a video tape or music to make calisthenics fun for children and allow them to expend some excess energy.

GROUP DAY CARE SURVEY

DIRECTIONS:

Please list the number of children currently enrolled in each box by age group. DO NOT PUT YOUR OFC LICENSED CAPACITY in the box for enrollment. Your enrollment may be higher, lower, or the same as your licensed capacity because of various combinations of children attending full or part time and the number of hours you are open.

Please explain in detail what you would need to expand including any regulatory issues that you believe would hinder your ability to expand.

AGE GROUP	PART-TIME CURRENTLY ENROLLED LESS THAN 30 HRS/WK.	FULL-TIME CURRENTLY ENROLLED 30/HRS OR MORE A WK.	PART-TIME VACANCIES LESS THAN 30 HRS/WK'	FULL-TIME VACANCIES 30/HRS OR MORE A WEEK
Infant				
Toddler				
Mixed Group				
Pre-School				
School Age				

Program Name: _____ Facility # _____

Would you be interested in expanding the current program? YES NO

Barriers:	Lack of Demand	<input type="checkbox"/>	Toilets/Washbasins	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Indoor Space	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staffing	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Outdoor Space	<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Explain Barriers:

(See next page for School Age Survey and mailing instructions)

SCHOOL AGE CHILD CARE SURVEY

DIRECTIONS:

Please list the number of children by each appropriate group. If current enrollment does not reflect the typical enrollment of the program, please provide your typical number of children (example: if your program currently has 20 children enrolled, but usually has 30 put the number 30). DO NOT PUT YOUR OFC LICENSED CAPACITY in the box for enrollment.

Please explain in detail what you would need to expand including any regulatory issues that you believe would hinder your ability to expand.

PROGRAM TYPE	AVERAGE/TYPICAL ENROLLMENT (NUMBER OF CHILDREN)	AVERAGE/TYPICAL VACANCIES (NUMBER OF CHILDREN)
Before School		
After School		
Holidays		
Summer Program		
School Age		

Program Name: _____ Facility # _____

Would you be interested in expanding the current program? YES NO

Barriers: Lack of Demand <input type="checkbox"/>	Toilets/Washbasins <input type="checkbox"/>
Indoor Space <input type="checkbox"/>	Staffing <input type="checkbox"/>
Outdoor Space <input type="checkbox"/>	Financial <input type="checkbox"/>
Equipment <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>

Explain Barriers:

Please tear out and mail all completed surveys to:

Office for Children
Sandra Freedman
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

PARENT FOCUS GROUPS

With support from the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, OFC conducted four focus groups comprised of parents from Springfield, Lowell, New Bedford and Worcester. The purpose of the meetings was to learn about parents' experiences with the child care system in general, what the major obstacles are to obtaining services and what they need/want in terms of child care.

When asked to describe their child care situations, almost all parents described the tremendous fear and guilt they felt when placing their child in day care.

Most parents agreed that the major obstacle to obtaining child care is the lack of information available to help them find child care.

Among the things parents look for before making their choice were cleanliness, friendly atmosphere, open door policies, positive interaction between provider and child, good variety of activities and regular reports about their children's progress.

OFC sponsored the meetings with the help of the Preschool Enrichment Team in Springfield, Child Care Search in Acton, Child Care Works in New Bedford and Yours For Children in Oxford.

SUGGESTION BOX

Please take a minute to fill out the survey located on pages 5 and 6 if you are a group day care or school age child care provider. Please write to us with any ideas you have on ways to expand the number of child care slots available. As always, we appreciate your comments and suggestions

COMING ATTRACTIONS

- * PRONET -- A new training database
- * Provider Mentoring Project
- * Report on Public Hearings
- * Welfare Reform Update

OFC LICENSED PROGRAMS

(statistics as of October 1994)

Family Day Care

#	10,767	Total Capacity	61,280
---	--------	----------------	--------

Group Day Care

#	2099	Total Capacity	90,508
---	------	----------------	--------

School Age Care

#	491	Total Capacity	20,264
---	-----	----------------	--------

Substitute Care (Shelter & Group Care only)

#	629	Total Capacity	6,384
---	-----	----------------	-------

on any topics. Please mail comments to:

Office for Children
Attn: Chris Kealey
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

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1 ASHBURTON PLACE
BOSTON, MA 02108

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Argeo Paul Cellucci, Lt. Governor

Susan L. Costello, Acting Secretary

Virginia Melendez, Commissioner

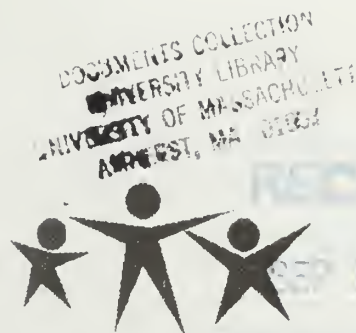
The Office for Children newsletter is published quarterly.

Christopher Kealey, Editor

Contributing to this issue were: Kathy Hilaski, Nicki Famiglietti, Karen Sheaffer, Jack Miller, Debbie Phillips, Sandra Freedman, Dan Walsh, Jan Avallone and Region 1 staff.

.....
Dear Commissioner,

CHILD CARE DIALOGUE



OFFICE FOR CHILDREN

SPRING 1995, Vol. 7

ATTENTION ALL PROVIDERS IN OFC REGION 3!!!

The Office for Children Regional Office formerly located in Peabody has moved to Beverly. The new address, phone number and fax number are listed below.

Office for Children
Beverly Regional Office
66 Cherry Hill Drive, Suite 100
Beverly, MA 01915
Phone: (508) 524-0012 Fax: (617) 727-2533

If you have any problems, please call our Central Office at (617) 727-8900 for assistance. Thank you for your patience during the transition.

OFC ANNOUNCES AFRICAN-AMERICAN PROVIDER FOCUS GROUPS

The Office for Children will conduct four focus groups in April 1995 to identify the professional development needs of African-American child care providers. Group day care, school age and family day care providers are invited to participate.

Providers who are interested in attending any of the following focus group sessions are encouraged to contact the lead OFC staff below as soon as possible to register.

TAUNTON

Saturday, April 1, 9:30 AM - 1:00 PM
Sandra Dillon, Ann Santos, Mike Avery
(508) 947-1133

SPRINGFIELD

Thursday, April 6, 4:00 - 6:00 PM
Shirley Hudson, John Manning
(413) 784-1225

DORCHESTER

Saturday, April 8, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Martha Roberts, Ginger Pruitt, Lorna Smith
(617) 727-8898

ROXBURY

Saturday, April 22, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Martha Roberts, Ginger Pruitt, Lorna Smith
(617) 727-8898

INSIDE:

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| ■ Technical Assistance Paper | 6 |

COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

Dear Child Care Professional,

February marked my second anniversary as Commissioner at the Office for Children. Naturally, I spent some time reflecting on the last two years, as well as my vision for the future of the agency.

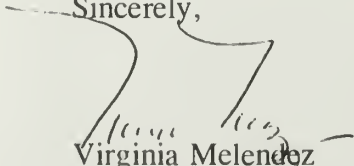
At the top of my agenda when I arrived at the Office two years ago was to personally meet with as many child care providers as possible to learn about your concerns. From those meetings came many wonderful ideas on how we could improve services to children, parents and providers.

I invite you to continue sharing your concerns and recommendations to help us develop the agenda for the next two years. Your continued cooperation and communication will be essential for us to succeed in meeting the important challenges ahead such as implementing Welfare Reform.

It has been my pleasure to serve as Commissioner during the past two years. It has not always been easy, but it has been rewarding, largely due to the hard work and commitment of the entire Office for Children staff. I also must add a special thanks to the members of the Professional Development Advisory Group and the Multilingual Task Force for their expert counsel, ensuring that licensed providers have greater opportunities for development and training.

Thank you for your support and encouragement over the past two years. I appreciate your tireless efforts on behalf of children and your commitment to excellence in child care. I look to the future with hope and optimism that we will continue on the path of excellence.

Sincerely,


Virginia Melendez
Commissioner

PROVIDER MAIL

Thank you
for your
letters. Below is a
sample of your
letters from the
Winter suggestion
box.



"Its seems regulations are always changing. Devote one page of your newsletter to review one regulation at a time to eliminate the grey."

L.B., Norwell

Editor: In past issues we have devoted considerable space to detail changes in regulations and we will continue to do so. If providers have specific questions that we do not cover, please contact your licensor.

"I think it would be ideal if I could have an assistant and increase my number to 8-10 children. I believe that 1-4 or 1-5 is a safer ratio."

G.H., Wayland

Editor: We filed legislation to increase capacity. Please see the article on page 3 updating the status of family child care. OFC cannot authorize an increase without passage of legislation and no providers are authorized to care for more than six children.

"I need to know if I can credit a 15 CEU home course toward my day care requirement for training."

A.B., Beverly

Editor: Please call your local child care resource and referral agency.

UPDATE ON OFC LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

As many of you are already aware, the Office for Children has filed a bill for consideration in the 1995 legislative session to increase the number of children allowed in a family child care home.

It has come to our attention that there remains confusion and misinformation surrounding the current status of family child care homes. To be clear, under no circumstance is any family child care provider authorized to care for more than their licensed capacity which by law cannot exceed six children.



We will continue to work hard toward passage of the bill.

CHANGES IN OFC REGULATIONS

GROUP DAY CARE

The Office for Children recently made changes to the group day care regulations which became effective on February 10, 1995.

* Prevention of Abuse & Neglect - A new section was added detailing procedures for prevention.

* Admissible Evidence at a Hearing and Notification of Emergency Suspension - Clarifies what evidence is admissible and how providers will be notified of an emergency suspension of a license.

* Non-discrimination - Adds language to ensure consistency throughout all OFC regulations on non-discrimination policy.

* Self Made Bleach Solutions - The Office has developed a technical assistance sheet to help providers determine which bleach solution is appropriate to use. In effort to better serve you, we have included the entire technical assistance sheet on page 6 of this newsletter.

FAMILY DAY CARE

Two changes to the family day care regulations became effective on February 24, 1995.

* Change of Address - Adds flexibility when a provider moves to a new location.

* Duration of a License - Adds flexibility for renewal of licenses.

Complete copies of the regulations can be obtained by calling the State Bookstore at (617) 727-2834.

CORI CHECKS -- HOW YOU CAN HELP TO IMPROVE THE PROCESS

OFC processed 30,000 Criminal Record Offender Information (CORI) checks in fiscal year 1994. With that many requests in one year, the only way we can guarantee a prompt response is if we have **all** of the information required.

Please help us to serve you better and faster by double checking your requests for CORI checks. The most common items that cause delays in processing are date of birth blank, signature blank and use of an incorrect form.

If you have any questions, please call our CORI Unit at (617) 727-8900 x107.

PREPARING FOR SPRING -- TIPS FROM LICENSING SPECIALISTS

If the Groundhog is correct, then spring is fast approaching which means that equipment that has laid dormant all winter will soon be in use.

The changing weather brings relief to the cabin fever many providers and children experience during the winter months.

Below are some thoughts on how to prepare for a safe spring and summer.

- ★ Check the play area for broken glass, litter and large rocks.
- ★ Be sure the surface under play equipment has enough soft, loose fill such as pea gravel, wood chips, or sand.
- ★ Check play ground equipment for sharp edges, rough surfaces and loose or broken parts. Is wooden equipment free from chipping paint and splinters? Is metal equipment free from rust? Are nuts, bolts, and screws secured tightly? Are they recessed and/or covered?
- ★ Are anchors for equipment stable and buried below ground?
- ★ Check fencing for broken sections and make certain that the fence is secure.
- ★ Check the yard for any equipment, lawnmowers, or garden tools and remove them.

A Free Handbook For Public Playground Safety is available by writing to:

U.S. Consumer Product Safety
Commission, 10 Causeway St., Room 224,
Boston, MA 02222

GROUP DAY CARE & SCHOOL AGE CHILD CARE SURVEY

In the last newsletter we asked all group day care and school age child care programs to complete a survey on the number of vacancies available. We are pleased by the strong number of responses to the survey which we are continuing to receive and process.

A special thanks to all who took the time to respond.

RECENT MEDIA COVERAGE ON CHILD CARE CENTERS

As many of you are aware, national, state and local media recently covered a study done by four universities which found that day care centers provide poor quality services that compromise children's development. The study, focusing on California, Colorado, North Carolina and Connecticut, found that one in eight centers provide care where the health and safety of children are threatened and that fewer than two of ten centers provide developmentally appropriate care.

The Office for Children responded to the study by pointing out that Massachusetts standards are among the best in the country and that licensed child care providers in this state are well trained professionals.

Although the study did not focus on Massachusetts, many parents and providers were still alarmed. Through the media, OFC was able to communicate that child care in this state is among the best in the nation. Media coverage included Channels 4 & 7, Boston Globe, Springfield Union News and Berkshire Eagle.

PRONET -- PROFESSIONAL CAREGIVER NETWORK

The Office for Children has developed a new computerized training database, PRONet, to improve access to training events throughout the state.

Specifically, PRONet will make it much easier to identify training events in your area, which should assist you in meeting the required training. PRONet will help you meet your individual training needs.

PRONet will be available in your local Child Care Resource & Referral Agency in May 1995. If you do not know the name of your local agency or have any questions, please contact OFC at (617) 727-8900.

EL COMIENZO

OFC is seeking Spanish-speaking volunteers interested in being trained to train others on becoming a family child care provider. Through the national El Comienzo Project, funded by the Ford Foundation, Levi Strauss and Company Child Care Fund, the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network will provide a two-day training and leadership seminar. The seminar will address the shortage of multilingual and culturally-based services for family child care providers by providing training to new providers whose first language is Spanish.

Training for trainers will be offered for up to 24 persons at no cost to the participants on May 22 and 23.

If you would like to learn more about this project or register, please contact Jan Anderson Avallone at (617)727-8900 x146.

WELFARE REFORM HIGHLIGHTS

Recently enacted measures to reform the state's welfare system will impact child care. Many providers serve parents who receive AFDC benefits, and have questions about the changes. Below are some highlights of the Welfare Reform Bill.

Work Requirement: Able-bodied AFDC parents who are non-exempt and whose child is of school age must work 20 hours per week.

Time Limits: Assistance is limited to 24 months in a 60 month period. Those participating in MassJOBS as of 1/1/95 will receive benefits until they complete the program.

Exemptions: Those recipients exempt include disabled parents, parents caring for disabled children and/or children under age two, parents with any child under three months, parents in their third trimester, parents under twenty attending high school and caretaker relatives.

Work Incentives: A family subject to the 2.75 percent reduction will be permitted to retain \$30 plus one-half of earned income every month without benefits being reduced. Exempt parents may keep \$30 plus one-third of earned income.

Community Service: Able-bodied recipients who seek work but cannot find it and those who do not generate enough income from part-time work, must work a minimum of 20 hours of community service.

Family Cap: No additional benefits for children born to recipients. Commissioner may waive the cap in extraordinary cases.

(continued on page 7)

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Office for Children



OFFICE FOR CHILDREN

BLEACH SOLUTION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SHEET TA-OFC-01

Bleach Solutions



WELFARE REFORM HIGHLIGHTS

(continued from page 5)

Employer Subsidies: The state will pay participating employers \$3.50 per hour for each recipient for a period of nine months, and \$2.50 per hour for three months. An employer who hires a former recipient into non-subsidized employment receives a tax credit of \$100 per month for a maximum of twelve months.

Teen Parents: For parents under twenty to receive benefits, they must have a high school diploma, GED or be in a program to attain one, and live in the home of a responsible adult, relative or structured setting.

Paternity Establishment/Child Support: Strengthens requirements for establishing paternity. Courts are authorized to order community service when a parent is in contempt of a court order.

Immunization Requirement: Parents must provide proof to the Department that children have received necessary immunizations or risk losing the parental portion of the grant.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

- ★ Provider Focus Group Update
- ★ Family Day Care Renewal Package
- ★ Professional Development

OFC LICENSED PROGRAMS

(statistics as of December 1994)

Family Day Care

#	10,668	Total Capacity	60,803
---	--------	----------------	--------

Group Day Care

#	2123	Total Capacity	91,134
---	------	----------------	--------

School Age Care

#	508	Total Capacity	21,121
---	-----	----------------	--------

Substitute Care

(Shelter & Group Care only)

#	631	Total Capacity	6,455
---	-----	----------------	-------

SUGGESTION BOX

Family Child Care Providers please send us a postcard or the back of this section stating your OFC capacity and current enrollment. Tell us whether you would be willing to expand and mention any barriers to expansion (aside from increasing the number above six -- we are working on that now).

As always, we appreciate your comments and suggestions on any topics. Please mail comments to:

Office for Children
Attn: Chris Kealey
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

OFFICE FOR CHILDREN
1 ASHBURTON PLACE
BOSTON, MA 02108

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Office for Children

William F. Weld, Governor

Argeo Paul Cellucci, Lt. Governor

Gerald Whitburn, Secretary

Susan L. Costello, Assistant Secretary

Virginia Melendez, Commissioner

The Office for Children newsletter is published quarterly.
Christopher Kealey, Editor

Contributing to this issue were: Karen Sheaffer, Debbie Phillips, Dan Walsh, Jan Avallone,
Anne Moniz, Joyce Holen, Bruce Hudson and Region 2 Licensing Staff.

.....
Dear Commissioner,

CHILD CARE DIALOGUE

MASSACHUSETTS COLLECTION
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UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
AMHERST



OFFICE FOR CHILDREN

FALL 1995, VOL. 9

OFC RECEIVES GRANT TO HELP CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

As part of a Federal program -- Child Care 2000 -- the Office for Children was awarded a five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Early Education Program for Children with Disabilities. The grant will be used to develop and implement enhanced resource and referral services to help children with disabilities and their families gain access to child care services in communities throughout Massachusetts.

Child Care 2000 will build on existing strengths of the child care system in Massachusetts. Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies will help families locate inclusive child care and assist providers by offering training and technical assistance in caring for children with disabilities. Resource and Referral Agency staff will coordinate training and services to increase accessibility and improve the quality of care.

For more information about this project, please write to:

Margaret C. O'Hare, Project Director
Office for Children
One Ashburton Place, Room 1111
Boston, MA 02108

REENGINEERING THE TEACHER QUALIFICATION PROCESS

Your letters and suggestions have overwhelmingly recommended revisions to OFC's teacher qualifications system. After much study of the existing system and analysis of both the providers' needs and OFC's resources, OFC has designed a new system that will be implemented by November 1, 1995.

Changes will be made in both the regulations and in the process for having qualifications certified and recorded by the Office for Children. The revised regulations will make each step of the professional child care lattice distinct, with minimum standards that are simple to understand and to apply. The second major

(continued page 5)

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■ Commissioner's Corner	2
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■ Substitute Care Revisioning	5

COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

Dear Child Care Professional,

I hope you all had a terrific Summer. For OFC, the Summer is a time to reflect on the previous fiscal year and finalize plans for the fiscal year ahead. I want to share with you some of our accomplishments in FY95 and our goals for FY96.

In FY95, we focused on providing quality customer service to all of our licensed programs, and we accomplished a lot in pursuit of this objective.

OFC issued 2097 new licenses and renewed 3055 licenses; coordinated and sponsored trainings for more than 16,000 caregivers through local child care resource and referral agencies; developed a professional development plan to improve the overall quality of child care; certified more than 2300 child care staff; reengineered family child care, streamlining the family child care pre-application, application and renewal application.

OFC also revised and updated regulations for group day care, drafted adoption legislation and drafted standards for Pregnant and Parenting Teen Programs.

In FY96, we will provide even better customer service. We have set ambitious goals to achieve this objective. OFC will continue to redesign its services to better meet your needs and improve the licensing process for all programs; promote high quality standards by facilitating more training opportunities for providers; and educate parents about licensing and quality child care.

Thank you all for the support and suggestions you offered during FY95. I look forward to working with you to ensure that children have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Sincerely,


Virginia Melendez
Commissioner

PROVIDER MAIL

Thank you for writing to us. Below is a sample of your letters.



"I have had the pleasure of working with [two substitute care licensors] as part of the license review process. I interact with many human service providers attempting to navigate the intricate maze of institutional bureaucracy. It has been refreshing to work with the Office for Children [and] I have been impressed with the commitment, quality of work and support I have received.

C.G.
Brighton

Editor: Thank you for your kind letter. We will continue our efforts to provide quality customer service throughout the state.

"I am a candidate for a position in a day care center but I have not received my certificate yet, what can I do?"

Anonymous

Editor: If you have already applied for certification and have the necessary credentials, you should show copies of this documentation to the Director. As long as you have proof of your qualifications, a certificate from OFC is not required.

WELD-CELLUCCI ANNOUNCE COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF STATE GOVERNMENT

On August 3, 1995, Governor William Weld and Lieutenant Governor Paul Cellucci announced that they are conducting a comprehensive review of state government. Their major goal is not solely to make bureaucracies work more efficiently or to "reinvent" government, rather it is to examine the proper role of government in people's lives.

As they conduct their review, the key questions being asked will be, "Should government do this?" and then "Should state government do this?" Also, instead of asking, "What regulations can we cut?" the question will be, "What regulations do we need?" All agencies within the Executive Branch were asked to submit detailed analyses of each function the agency performs.

Governor Weld and Lt. Governor Cellucci believe government should meet basic functions such as protecting people from being injured by other people or by physical disasters, protecting those who are otherwise helpless, and protecting assets that must be held in common, everything from open space to roads and bridges.

Lt. Governor Cellucci will be conducting public hearings throughout the state to gather information from citizens on what functions they want government to perform.

OFC HONORS EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS AT STATE HOUSE



CDAs & Mentors Honored at the State House

The Office for Children honored early childhood educators during a recognition ceremony at the State House. Those being recognized included child care providers who completed the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential program based in Washington, D.C., and providers who completed the Family Child Care Mentor Project.

The CDA program is a major national effort to credential qualified caregivers aimed at improving the quality of child care by focusing on improving the skills of child care providers nationwide.

The Mentor Project resulted from an OFC partnership with WGBH-TV to use the power of children's television programs in a more constructive, educational manner in family child care homes. Family child

(continued next page)

RECOGNITION EVENT

(continued from page 3)

care providers were trained as mentors to help other licensed caregivers develop age appropriate curricula and activities for children.

Mr. Gerald Whitburn (pictured below), Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, was the keynote speaker at the event. "Our children represent our greatest asset, and it is appropriate to salute those who care for them and who play such a crucial role in children's growth, development and early childhood education," said Secretary Gerald Whitburn.



Secretary Whitburn addresses early childhood educators at the State House

"Massachusetts standards for early childhood education are among the highest in the nation, and these individuals have exceeded those standards by participating in programs that ultimately enhance the quality of care children receive," added OFC Commissioner Virginia Melendez.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION AWARDED TO GWEN MORGAN



Commissioner Virginia Melendez with Gwen Morgan at the State House

During the recognition event, OFC made a special presentation to Gwen Morgan for her outstanding efforts to improve the quality of child care.

As Founding Director of the Centers for Child Care Policy & Training at Wheelock College, Gwen has helped to shape the field of early childhood development. She is a true pioneer in the field and a great resource to all who have read her works and attended her lectures. Gwen is recognized nationwide as an expert on child care licensing and professional development.

OFC Commissioner Virginia Melendez hailed Gwen's contributions to enhance the respect for the child care profession. The Commissioner also thanked Gwen for her insightful counsel during the past three years.

REVISIONING SUBSTITUTE CARE LICENSING PROGRAM

OFC now plans to review the substitute care licensing program beginning with group care and temporary shelters. An internal committee will start gathering information in September on ways to redesign and improve the service OFC provides to substitute care facilities.

The entire licensing process will be reviewed. The goal is similar to family child care revisioning -- make the licensing process more efficient and customer friendly by streamlining where it is appropriate and reduce the time and energy spent on paper work.

Because the main objective is to make the process more efficient for programs, now is the perfect opportunity to share any suggestions with us on how to improve the process. Examples of specific areas you may wish to comment on include possible regulatory changes, possible creation of a staff qualifications system, a change in the length of time a license is effective.

Please share this article with your staff to gather their ideas and suggestions. All comments may be submitted to:

Office for Children
Attn: Jack Miller
One Ashburton Place, Room 1111
Boston, MA 02108

PUBLIC HEARING ON TEEN PROGRAM REGULATIONS

On August 9, 1995 OFC held a public hearing on new regulations for the licensing of residential programs serving teenage parents.

OFC gathered useful information in the form of verbal and written suggestions from a number of individuals and organizations who work with teenage parents.

It is expected that the final version of the regulations will be issued by October 1, 1995. Special thanks to all who submitted comments and suggestions.

TEACHER QUALIFICATION

(continued from page 1)

change to the process is that the application form will be completely revised to be easier to read and fill out. Third, there will be no fee for the teacher qualification process.

More detail about the new teacher qualification system will appear in the next newsletter. Providers will also receive separate notice about the changes to the regulations and how to provide comments about them to OFC.

OFC is excited about these improvements to the teacher qualification process and hopes you will find the improved system much more responsive to your needs while ensuring children of qualified teachers and caregivers.

FAMILY CHILD CARE EXPANSION BILL

The legislation filed to create "large family day care" for up to 10 children remains in the House Committee on Ways & Means. OFC has worked hard with members of the legislature to effect passage of this legislation. If you are interested in this legislation, you may wish to call your State Representative. The main telephone number for the House of Representatives is (617) 722-2000. The bill is H.4707.

Until the law is changed, the maximum number of children that may be cared for in family child care is six.

IMMUNIZATION SURVEY RESULTS

OFC and the Department of Public Health wish to thank the over 2231 group day care providers who participated in the annual survey of the immunization levels of children enrolled in centers across the state.

The 1994-95 survey data indicates that 94% of children over age 2 have completed the immunization series. However, the data reveals that only 77% of children two years of age and younger have completed the series which is cause for some concern.

Please share with parents that it is recommended for all children to receive 4 doses of DTP, 3 doses of Polio, 1 dose of MMR, 4 doses of Hib and 3 doses of hepatitis B by their second birthday.

You will soon receive the 1995-96 survey in the mail. Please try to complete it by the October 15 deadline. If you have any questions or would like educational materials about immunizations, please call the Department of Public Health at (617) 938-6800.

NEW TRAINING CURRICULUM AVAILABLE IN SPANISH

The Office for Children is proud to introduce El Comienzo, a new training curriculum designed specifically for Spanish speaking family child care providers. It is the first such curriculum available in Massachusetts.

In May 1995, 30 bilingual trainers were trained by the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network to implement the curriculum which includes topics such as:

- Effective Business Practices in Family Day Care
- Planning a Child Care Environment
- Working with Parents
- Working with Children
- Health and Safety
- Food and Nutrition
- Child Care as a Career

The bilingual trainers will conduct the El Comienzo training at five regional conferences this Fall in cities across the state. These low cost conferences will feature materials in Spanish and credit toward OFC training requirements.

For more information, contact your local child care resource agency.

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

Many providers have taken time from their busy schedules to write to us through the suggestion box you find below. We appreciate your letters and hope that even more providers will write to us.



We realize that some folks prefer other ways of communicating, so OFC has established a new Child Care Provider Voice Mail Box. Now if you have a comment you want to share with us, you can simply pick up the phone and leave a voice mail message.

We will retrieve the messages daily and provide the information to the appropriate OFC staff for further action. Some of your messages may be printed in the next newsletter using only your initials and city/town or you may choose to remain anonymous.

To access the Provider Voice Mail Box, call (617) 727-8900 x136.

SUGGESTION BOX

Governor Weld and Lieutenant Governor Cellucci are conducting a comprehensive review of government. The fundamental question being asked is, "What should government's role be?" Please write to us and let us know what you think OFC's role should be in the future of child care.

MANUAL AVAILABLE TO GROUP DAY CARE & SCHOOL AGE CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

"Health and Safety in Child Care," a 560 page guide for child care providers, has been updated from its last edition in 1988. The manual is a publication of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) in collaboration with the Office for Children.

The guide includes many tools and practical information on a wide variety of issues that group day care and school age care providers will find extremely useful.

There are still a limited number of copies available free to group day care and school age child care providers. Those who want a copy may pick one up at your OFC Regional Office after June 1, 1995 while supplies last. OFC cannot mail this 560 page guide.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

- * Family Child Care Tier Structure
- * Reengineering CORI
- * Substitute Care Update

Please mail comments to:

Office for Children
Attn: Chris Kealey
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

OFFICE FOR CHILDREN
1 ASHBURTON PLACE
BOSTON, MA 02108

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Office for Children

William F. Weld, Governor

Argeo Paul Cellucci, Lt. Governor

Gerald Whitburn, Secretary

Susan L. Costello, Assistant Secretary

Virginia Melendez, Commissioner

The Office for Children newsletter is published quarterly.

Christopher Kealey, Editor

Contributing to this issue were: Peggy O'Hare, Nicki Famiglietti, Fran Barrett, Debbie Phillips, Jan Avallone, Phil Baimas and Region 3 staff.

Dear Commissioner,



OFFICE FOR CHILDREN

CHILD CARE DIALOGUE

SUMMER 1995, VOL. 8

OFC HOSTS REGIONAL AEYC CONFERENCE

OFC recently held a pre-conference session on the future of licensing prior to the NEAEYC Conference, which provided a forum for child care issues in each of the New England states. The purpose of the OFC session was to look at child care from new perspectives and to think beyond the present problems to what child care should be like in the 21st century.

Ultimately, OFC must find ways to use the statewide experience it has, add provider and parent needs and reach consensus on very important, sometimes controversial, issues that confront the future of child care. A difficult and delicate balance must be struck to meet the needs of children, families and providers when OFC issues new policies and regulations.

Most agree that ensuring the health and safety of children in a caring, warm environment that enables them to learn and grow is the number one priority. We want each child to have a full and fair opportunity to reach his/her full potential. We want parents of all races, religions and economic backgrounds to be able to find good, accessible child care for their children.

(continued page 7)

WELFARE REFORM: TEEN-AGE PARENTS

One aspect of welfare reform is new attention to young parents. Effective July 1, 1995, parents who are under 18 must live at home or in a structured setting to be eligible for assistance payments. The law requires OFC to promulgate regulations by 7/1/95 for the licensing of residential programs serving teenage parents.

In 1994, OFC issued a policy that now applies to the licensure of pregnant and parenting teen programs. This policy will give OFC a basis to develop the new regulations.

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■ Complaint Investigations	5

COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

Dear Child Care Professional,

I have recently had the opportunity to participate in a variety of panel discussions, and attend a number of conferences across the state on the current status and future of child care. One conference in particular was sponsored by OFC and focused on the future of licensing.

In June OFC will hold a strategic planning session to develop our agenda for the coming fiscal year which begins July 1, 1995. We need to hear from you about any concerns or issues you want us to address. Please take a moment to send a note or postcard with ideas on how we can improve our service to you.

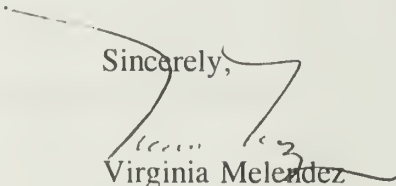
One of my top priorities will be to expand our outreach efforts to minority communities. OFC must be sensitive to the cultural differences of the diverse population we serve and take these differences into account when we study a program. We all must continue to develop and enhance our cultural competence.

We may not solve all the myriad problems that face us in the child care arena, but our watchword should always be progress. Progress toward better quality care for all children. Progress toward better understanding of and greater tolerance for our differences.

As early childhood educators, you have the opportunity to teach children how we can celebrate our differences as well as those things we have in common. I encourage you all to expand the number of activities that educate children about the various cultures that exist.

I want a future where children of all races and economic backgrounds have a safe, loving child care setting that helps them to grow and learn.

Sincerely,


Virginia Melendez
Commissioner

PROVIDER MAIL

Thank you
for your
letters. Below is a
sample of your
letters.



"Please let us know in the "Child Care Dialogue how we can support the bill to increase the number of kids allowed in family day care."

Anonymous

Editor: A Bill, House 4303, is currently in the House of Representatives. For a copy of the Bill, contact your Representative at (617) 722-2000. Please see the article on page 3 for more details.

"Where can I find a course in day care administration to become a director of a day care center."

Anonymous

Editor: The child care resource & referral agency that serves your area should be able to provide you with detailed information about available courses. If you need the phone number of your agency, please call our main number at (617) 727-8900.

"Thank you for publishing a newsletter. It contains great information. Is it possible you could publish it in Spanish?"

J. L., Lawrence

Editor: We have translated certain regulations and other materials into Spanish and other languages. We hope to some day translate the newsletter into more languages as well.

FAMILY DAY CARE LEGISLATION

The Joint Committee on Human Services issued a favorable recommendation to a bill, H. 4303, to increase the number of children allowed in a family day care home. The bill was then sent to the House Committee on Ways & Means awaiting further action by the Committee before it can go before the full House of Representatives for a vote.

H. 4303 would allow an increase to 10 in large family day care homes. To be eligible, a provider would need three years experience as a licensed family day care provider, receive additional training each year and have an approved assistant when the number of children exceeded six. These requirements would be written into the law and would not be subject to change by OFC through regulations. OFC's experience indicates that flexibility is essential to meet the changing needs of children and families.



OFC continues to actively support passage of legislation to increase in the capacity for family day care providers who meet the criteria necessary to offer a safe, caring environment for larger numbers of children.

OFC filed a bill, H.28, that was not favored by the Committee. The OFC bill would have allowed up to nine children in family day care and also would have put no specific requirements in the statute, granting OFC the authority to issue appropriate regulations.

MOVING?

Based on strong provider input, OFC has amended the family day care regulation on change of address.

The new regulation and policy make it easier for providers who are moving to maintain their current license. Perhaps of greater importance is the provision which waives the \$75 application fee for providers who notify OFC at least two weeks prior to the move.



By notifying OFC in advance of the move, providers will have no break in the term of their license. Getting the application in at least two weeks prior to the move enables OFC to simply amend the current license based on the date of the move.

Whether you are planning on moving now or sometime in the future, remember to notify us well in advance of your move to save yourself time and money.

REVISED SUPERVISION POLICY

Supervision in child care is so important that OFC recently revised the family child care supervision policy. The OFC policy makes clear the responsibilities of providers and emphasizes the need for using good judgment.

Your licensor will review the revised policy with you at the time of your license renewal.

UPDATED MANUAL AVAILABLE TO GROUP DAY CARE & SCHOOL AGE CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

"Health and Safety in Child Care," a 560 page guide for child care providers, has been updated from its last edition in 1988. The manual is a publication of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) in collaboration with the Office for Children.

The guide includes many tools and practical information on a wide variety of issues that group day care and school age care providers will find extremely useful.

DPH has printed a number of copies especially for the Office. These will be available free to group day care and school age child care providers while they last. Those who want a copy may pick one up at the OFC Regional Office in your area after June 1, 1995. OFC regrets not being able to mail this excellent guide.

NEW GUIDE TO CHAPTER 766

OFC recently developed a new publication entitled, "Practical Guide to Chapter 766." This comprehensive manual for parents will help families access the appropriate services under the provisions of Chapter 766, the Special Education Law. It also answers the most commonly asked questions and provides helpful tips on how to work with local officials to achieve the best results.

If you would like a free copy, please call (617) 727-8900.

SUMMER SAFETY -- TIPS FROM LICENSING SPECIALISTS

The warmth of the approaching summer season brings joy to many providers who look forward to the field trips and outings planned for the next few months. When warmth gives way to heat, many turn to pools, beaches and lakes for welcome relief.

Below are some ideas for a safe, active summer season of fun in the sun.

- ★ Remind parents of the items children will need during the summer, such as extra clothes, towels and hats.
- ★ Review children's medical information to assess any risks, such as allergies, extreme reaction to bee stings, etc., that may be more likely during warm weather.
- ★ Sun Screen -- all children need extra protection from the sun, but it may be particularly urgent for children who take medication. A common side effect of many medications is an increased sensitivity to the sun.
- ★ Water Safety -- Reliance on flotation devices may give children a false sense of confidence in deeper water. Develop a supervision plan to use when children are in or near the water. Assess the swimming ability of each child prior to the outing.
- ★ Plan Field Trips -- Be sure to have all of the emergency phone numbers and appropriate permission slips from parents. It is a good idea to offer extra in-house training to staff about particular children's needs/abilities.

OFC COMPLAINT INVESTIGATIONS -- WHAT TO EXPECT

Most providers have never had a complaint filed against them. However, this article details what to expect in the event that OFC does receive a report and conducts an investigation.

The Office for Children is mandated to respond to all complaints by conducting an announced or unannounced site visit. OFC recognizes that an investigation can be an uncomfortable process, but our primary goal is to assure the safety and well-being of children.

During an investigation the investigator will first give you general information about the allegation(s). Then, routine investigation activities will be conducted such as observation, site inspection, interviews and a review of records.

Below are some commonly asked questions by providers about the process.

What are my rights?

An allegation is a question about your child care program, but is **not** an assumption of guilt. An investigator must find reasonable cause to believe that an allegation is true before it is considered a non-compliance of the regulations.

You have the right to ask questions throughout the investigation process. You have the right to be treated in a respectful manner at all times.

What happens after an investigation?

The findings of the investigation will be given to you both verbally and in a written report. If the investigator finds evidence that you are in non-compliance with OFC regulation(s), you will be asked to make corrections. Sometimes the Office will accept "written assurance" from the provider that the non-compliance(s) will be corrected. For serious or chronic non-compliances, OFC will require a compliance visit be made to your site/home.

Is there an opportunity to disagree or change the findings of an investigation?

Yes. If you disagree with a finding, you may:

- * Submit a written statement with the specific facts that you feel contradict the findings.
- * Notify the investigator and his/her supervisor of your disagreement.
- * Participate in an appeal procedure as described in the written legal order, if applicable.

After the investigation, who has access to these findings?

Information is accessible to the public under the Freedom of Public Information Act. The OFC legal department will determine what information can be released under these laws. Generally, the names of children, third parties and other confidential information are removed.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN FOCUS GROUPS A SUCCESS

OFC held focus groups in Taunton, Springfield and Boston to identify professional development needs and other concerns of African-American providers. The focus groups brought African-American providers together to discuss child care issues in their communities.

Surveys were conducted at each meeting to assess specific needs and problems identified by African-American providers. Providers expressed their desire for more OFC support to increase the accessibility of training and increase funding. Providers stated that with proper training they can provide higher quality care and maximize their earnings.

Providers described difficulties in meeting certain needs children have and expressed interest in training programs to address cultural differences and diversity.

Many providers expressed interest in assuming leadership roles in the community by becoming mentors to new family child care providers. Some are already organizing more focus groups and forming support systems within the African-American community.

Most agreed that the focus groups were an excellent start toward improved communication between providers and OFC. The African-American focus groups gave providers a needed forum to discuss their needs and share their concerns.

OFC is committed to continuing the effort to identify provider needs and implement appropriate changes. The focus groups

were a positive step toward meeting the professional development needs of African-American providers and improve the quality of care children receive.

WELFARE REFORM: TEEN-AGE PARENTS

(continued from page 1)

Due to the short time frame, the regulations will be issued as "Emergency Regulations" in order to meet the July 1, 1995 deadline. The usual comment period will be held following the emergency promulgation. Any changes will be made accordingly prior to finalization of these new regulations.

There are currently only a dozen licensed programs in Massachusetts affected by the regulations. Copies of the emergency regulations and other details will be available from OFC after July 1, 1995.

OFC LICENSED PROGRAMS

(statistics as of March 1995)

Family Day Care

#	10,586	Total Capacity	55,421
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Group Day Care

#	2135	Total Capacity	91,678
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School Age Care

#	503	Total Capacity	21,533
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REGIONAL CONFERENCE

(continued from page 1)

OFC must be sensitive to the cultural differences of the diverse population we serve and take these differences into account in licensing a program. We must continue to develop and enhance our cultural competence.

Everyone agreed that we want to see a society that values early childhood educators and pays them decent wages. Providers deserve far more respect than they currently receive.

One session on the future of child care will not solve the problems that exist. It was, however, a positive step toward shaping the necessary changes in the child care system.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

- * New Group Day Care Brochure
- * Re-engineering Teacher Certification Program
- * Creating a Tier Structure in Family Child Care

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SUGGESTION BOX

Please take a minute to fill out the back portion of this newsletter. We need to hear about any concerns, hopes and needs you have. Also, please tell us if something is working particularly well so we can pass it on to others. We take your letters and comments very seriously as we continue to

NEW RENEWAL APPLICATION SIMPLIFIES PROCESS

In an effort to offer better service to providers at the time of license renewal, OFC has streamlined the renewal application.

The new form was completely redesigned to reduce the burden family child care providers feel during the time of renewal. The new application also clears up any confusion about OFC expectations during the visit by a licensing specialist.

Many who have already worked with the new materials commented that there has been a decrease in the tension some providers experience in anticipation of the OFC visit. All of the major items licensors intend to look at are outlined in the renewal application package which includes a comprehensive licensing manual.

Also recently redesigned were the family day care pre-application and application. These documents and the renewal materials enable OFC to communicate more of the information providers need, while also making it much simpler to fill out.

look for ways to enhance the way we do business at OFC. Mail comments to:

Office for Children
Attn: Chris Kealey
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

OFFICE FOR CHILDREN
1 ASHBURTON PLACE
BOSTON, MA 02108

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Office for Children

William F. Weld, Governor

Argeo Paul Cellucci, Lt. Governor

Gerald Whitburn, Secretary

Susan L. Costello, Assistant Secretary

Virginia Melendez, Commissioner

The Office for Children newsletter is published quarterly.

Christopher Kealey, Editor

Contributing to this issue were: Nicki Famiglietti, Marcia Farris, Fran Barrett, Jack Miller, Debbie Phillips, Etta Davis, Marion Marcum, Anne Moniz and Jan Avallone.

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Dear Commissioner,



OFFICE FOR CHILDREN

CHILD CARE DIALOGUE

Winter 1995-96, Vol. 10

NEW PROFESSIONAL CHILD CARE QUALIFICATIONS REGISTRY

On December 4, 1995, the Office for Children initiated a simplified registration system for group day care center staff qualifications. The new system features a shorter application that includes a new worksheet and technical assistance information clearly explaining the entire process.

Applicants for Teacher, Lead Teacher or Director will benefit by the new, three step process. 1) Complete a one page form; 2) Attach an experience verification form with copies of your credentials; 3) Return it to the Office for Children Central Office. You will be registered free of charge.

Center directors and child care resource and referral agencies will be among those receiving applications to distribute to anyone interested in becoming registered in the Professional Child Care Qualifications Registry.

The Qualifications Registry will also serve as a central database of information that will be used to support the field of early childhood development and improve

(continued on page 4)

SUBSTITUTE CARE SURVEY RESULTS

The Office for Children announced (in the Fall edition of this newsletter) its plans to begin revisioning the substitute care licensing program. The goals of revisioning are to improve services to providers, reduce administrative costs and increase the efficiency of the licensing process.

An important part of the redesign effort is the information the agency has gathered from the survey that was sent to all licensed substitute care providers in the Fall. The results of that survey are

(continued on page 5)

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COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

Dear Child Care Professional,

I want to wish everyone a safe, joyous holiday season and a wonderful new year. For many of us, this is a time to reflect on the year gone by and begin planning for the year ahead. It is also a time to make resolutions. I thought you might be interested to read a few of our resolutions at the Office for Children.

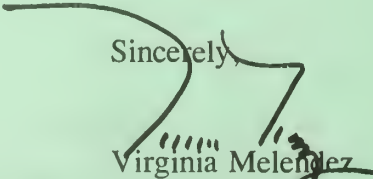
In 1996 we will:

- Achieve a faster, simpler licensing process
- Provide greater outreach to minority communities
- Offer more affordable, accessible trainings
- Combine licensing materials and procedures for programs operating both group day care and school age child care
- Increase focus on technical assistance
- Make substitute care licensing more responsive to provider needs expressed in the statewide survey
- Offer even better customer service to providers, parents and children.

We at the Office for Children appreciate the extraordinary dedication and commitment to excellence you bring to work each day. We realize that most of you work long hours, at low pay out of love for the children in your care. We owe it to all of you to do our best to help you succeed in providing top quality care.

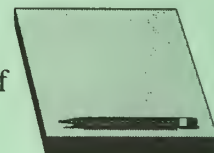
I look forward to working with you during 1996. I wish you all the best in the new year!

Sincerely,


Virginia Melendez
Commissioner

PROVIDER MAIL

Thank you for writing to us. Below is a sample of your letters.



"What can I do if a parent shows up to pick up their child and they are under the influence of alcohol?"

Anonymous

Editor: While a provider cannot legally refuse to allow a child to leave with his/her parent, you may want to suggest calling a cab or suggest another family member pick up the child. If the parent refuses and the situation is serious enough, you should notify the local police. Some providers include the procedure they would follow if this situation arose in the policies they give to new parents. Any time you have reasonable cause to suspect neglect, you have a responsibility to follow the 51A reporting process.

"Does Family Day Care experience count toward teacher certification?"

Anonymous

Editor: Yes. Family Day Care experience counts if the experience was supervised by a person who meets OFC's Lead Teacher qualification. Supervision includes observation and a conference every other month for the total number of months experience required for each specific level of qualification.

NEW VOICE MAIL BOX FOR PROVIDERS

For those who may have missed it, we created a new Provider Voice Mail Box which you can access any time (day or night) by calling (617) 727-8900 extension 136. We want to hear your questions and suggestions for improving our services. Below is a sample of calls we have received.



"My suggestion would be to establish a fax line so providers can send a fax of our suggestions."

Editor: Great idea! Our fax number is (617) 727-0528.

"What should I do if I have a Director I certificate when the changes become effective? Am I still *Director* qualified?"

Editor: Yes. Any person who was issued a valid certificate for Director I and/or Director II prior to December 4, 1995 is qualified as a Director under the new system.

"I didn't know that these changes were being planned. Can I use the courses I have already taken toward the Director qualifications?"

Editor: Yes. Until July 1, 1996, anyone may submit an application and verification of qualifications based on the prior Director I and Director II requirements to receive a Director certificate.

CHANGES MADE TO IMPROVE CORI PROCESS

There are a number of important changes to the way group day care, school age care and substitute care providers (not family day care) receive Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI).

As of January 1, 1996, all applicants for employment at your program will receive a computerized print out from the Criminal History Systems Board (through the Office for Children) listing any convictions and/or pending charges. The print out replaces the Office for Children form applicants currently receive and often submit for your review.

You will continue to receive a notice stating that CORI information exists. It is imperative that you and the applicant each complete and sign this notice and return it to the Office for Children.

The Office for Children is committed to conveying this important information to you in a timely, efficient manner. The information is to be used as a helpful tool when considering your hiring decision.

For more information about future changes, please watch for direct mailings from the Office for Children, as well as articles in this newsletter.

SPRING CONFERENCES

It is difficult to think about the spring in the middle of winter, but to reserve a spot you may want to sign up for training conferences now. Below is a brief list of some conferences you may want to consider. For other trainings and conferences in your area, please contact your local resource & referral agency or food program.

- Worcester Area AEYC Early Childhood Conference at Quinsigamond Community College, Saturday, April 27, 1996. For more information, contact Carol Lawson at (508) 854-4447.
- Annual Conference for Family Day Care, Holiday Inn, Mansfield, March 1, 2, & 3, 1996, sponsored by Nutrition Education & Child Care Food Program. For a brochure, please call (800) 232-7634.
- Preschool Enrichment Team's Annual Conference, Holyoke Community College, March 14, 1996. For more information, call (413) 736-3900.
- Family Day Care Conference, Boston Marriott/Copley Place, sponsored by Yours For Children, April 12 & 13, 1996. For more information, call (800) 222-2731.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS REGISTRY

(continued from page 1)

professional development opportunities for all caregivers.

As before, assistant teachers will not be registered, but the new system encourages everyone, from assistant teacher to director, to explore her/his options for climbing the career ladder in center-based child care. The aim of the Office for Children is to ease movement in the field of early childhood while improving the quality of caregivers.

In the future, the Office for Children is interested in building a voluntary career ladder in family child care and recognizing qualifications of school age child care professionals. This would create a career lattice for professionals in the field to build pathways from one step to another.

Revised regulations will be promulgated December 4, 1995, on an emergency basis making them effective immediately. Anyone may submit comment on the new regulations during a 90 day period between December 4, 1995 and March 4, 1995.

A public hearing for those who wish to give and/or hear comments is scheduled for January 9, 1995, 1:00 p.m., 21st floor, One Ashburton Place, in Boston.

Note: If weather requires cancelling the hearing on January 9, 1995, the alternate date is January 10, 1995 at the same time and place. The main OFC telephone number is (617) 727-8900.

SUBSTITUTE CARE SURVEY RESULTS

(continued from page 1)

being used as a guide for the committee working to make the process work better for the clients, providers and licensing staff.

Special thanks to all who participated in the survey making it such a tremendous success. Below is a sample of the 121 responses we received from providers across the state.

- * 108 providers strongly agree or agree that the OFC licensing process helps to protect the health and safety of clients.
- * 95 strongly agree or agree that the licensing process is supportive of the program's clinical goals.
- * 100 strongly agree or agree that the licensing process is supportive of the administrative goals of the program.
- * 87 strongly agree or agree that the licensing process enhances the quality of care that young people receive.
- * 84 strongly agree or agree that the communication with OFC licensor staff is sufficient.
- * 96 strongly agree or agree that the OFC licensing process was explained sufficiently to program staff.

Providers suggested that OFC licensing staff should increase its presence in the field during the licensing period to provide more opportunities for monitoring services and offering technical assistance. Providers recommended having training

opportunities that communicate the "best practices" in substitute care. Providers also want more training on procedures for the use of physical restraint. Some providers suggested license renewal meetings to help prepare them for the licensing process.

For more detailed information about the Licensing Survey, please call Jack Miller at (617) 727-8900 x110.

NEW LICENSING CHECKLIST FOR SUBSTITUTE CARE

Substitute care programs will soon have a new tool designed to make the OFC licensing process easier and more efficient. A new checklist was developed to help programs maintain records and prepare for the biennial licensing study.

The new checklist is the same form OFC licensors will use to complete their random review of facility records. Because the checklist also outlines all regulatory compliance areas a licensor will examine, it should serve as a useful guide to maintain compliance with OFC standards and to prepare for a licensing study.

Several residential programs and OFC licensors will pilot the checklist prior to statewide implementation scheduled for later this winter. The checklist will be distributed to all programs upon completion of the pilot phase.

If you are interested in testing the checklist in your program or want to learn more about it, please contact Jack Miller at (617) 727-8900 x110.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE -- FAMILY CHILD CARE EXPANSION BILL

Good news for those of you interested in the legislation to create "large family day care" for up to 10 children. As of November 30, 1995, the bill cleared an important hurdle being passed by the House of Representatives. It still must be passed by the Senate and signed by the Governor before it becomes law.



If you want to offer support for the bill, H. 4303, you can call or write to your state senator. The main telephone number for the Senate Clerk's Office is (617) 722-1276.

Reminder: Until the law is changed, the maximum number of children that may be cared for in family child care is six.

PUZZLE PLACE

WGBH-TV will introduce a new public television children's program, *The Puzzle Place*, as part of the Ready to Learn curriculum in 1996. The television program will focus on educating children about cultural diversity and getting along with others. The Office for Children is pleased about expanding its partnership with WGBH to include this new program in the Ready to Learn Project. The Project will be available statewide in 1996, as all 13 child care resource and referral agencies will participate in Ready to Learn.

NEW FAMILY CHILD CARE ORIENTATIONS A SUCCESS

Family child care providers have given the new orientation curriculum rave reviews. The new orientation, introduced on October 1, 1995, is designed to help newly licensed child care providers get their programs started in the right direction.

Many providers who participated in the orientations have voiced their satisfaction with the meetings. Providers said they learned a lot about the licensing process, the business aspects of family day care, the resources available to providers, and they received information about how to balance work and family.

Listening to some of the statements providers made following the new orientations offers encouraging signs that the curriculum is working: "I feel more confident," said one provider, "I can't wait to start," exclaimed another, and "I am excited and feel positive [about being considered a family child care professional]."

Providers attending the orientations indicated they would like to have more training including workshops on taxes, record-keeping, parent/provider communication, marketing, planning programs and behavior management.

Many of these issues are covered in detailed trainings (that count toward OFC requirements) offered by your local child care resource & referral agency.

WINTER PREPARATION -- ACTIVITY IDEAS & TIPS

The prospect of a long winter and the increased time indoors may not be inspiring to many providers. But there are ways to have fun despite the cold.

- ★ Even going out for a short period of time can relieve stress and give kids a chance to burn some energy. Getting ready can be fun if you make it into a game for the children.
 - ★ Have an indoor picnic or a beach day where children could pretend they are at the beach.
 - ★ Turn your play space or living room into an imaginary bus stop, train station or airport. You and the children can go on a trip without ever leaving while each child plays a different role as pilot, conductor, attendant, ticket taker, etc.
 - ★ Be certain to keep decks, stairs and play spaces shoveled and clear of dangerous ice.
 - ★ Remind parents to bring extra clothing -- especially hats and mittens.
-

SUGGESTION BOX

What are two or three things the Office for Children could do to improve the licensing process? As always, we appreciate your candid comments and suggestions on ways to enhance the services we provide.

FREE BROCHURE EXPLAINS PROVIDER RIGHTS

While most providers have never had a complaint filed against them, OFC developed a free brochure explaining what to expect in the event that an investigation is conducted.

The Office for Children is mandated to respond to all complaints. Because OFC recognizes that an investigation can be an uncomfortable process, staff are trained to consider the needs of both the children and the caregiver. Our primary goal is to assure the well-being of children.

Licensing staff does weigh information about the source and nature of a complaint to guard against the potential harassment of a provider due to baseless allegations.

For a copy of the brochure, please contact the OFC local office that serves you or call our central office telephone number (617) 727-8900.

Please mail comments to:

Office for Children
Attn: Chris Kealey
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

OFFICE FOR CHILDREN
1 ASHBURTON PLACE
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Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Office for Children

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Dear Commissioner,

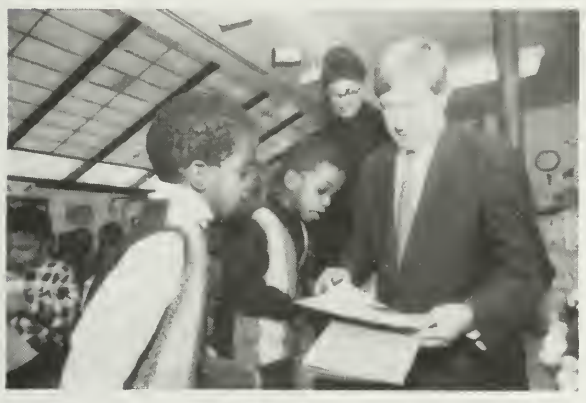


OFFICE FOR CHILDREN

CHILD CARE DIALOGUE

Spring 1996, Vol. 11

GOVERNOR WELD ANNOUNCES \$50 MILLION FOR NEW CHILD CARE SLOTS



Governor William Weld announced that he requested an increase of \$50 million to fund 10,000 new child care slots for working parents and parents leaving welfare for work in his Fiscal Year 1997 budget proposal.

"With this increase, we'll be able to raise the total number of day care slots we offer to low-income working people to 12,000 next year. That's 12,000 kids whose parents are not sick with worry at work because they can't afford to pay somebody good to look after their children -- or are paying somebody good and then can't pay the rest of the bills," Weld said at an announcement in January at the United South End Settlements Child Care Center.

(continued on page 3)

TEACHER QUALIFICATION CHANGES FINALIZED

As a quality customer service initiative the Office for Children has made changes to the staff qualifications system. The Office set out to create an entirely new system that was easier for providers to follow and easier for OFC to administer.

During a period of four months, the Office worked to develop the new system which features the elimination of the \$50 fee, a brand new database, a shorter, more simplified application process, greater

(continued on page 4)

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COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

Dear Child Care Professional,

I want to inform everyone that I am resigning from my position as Commissioner of the Office for Children effective March 30, 1996.

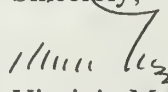
I am grateful for the opportunity to have served in an agency that I believe makes a tremendous impact on the well-being of children in our state. I am proud of the numerous accomplishments and strides we were able to make in pursuit of our ambitious mission.

When I first arrived at OFC, I was greeted with scores of letters from providers concerned about the services they were receiving. After reorganizing the agency, gaining input from providers through enhanced communication, implementing a new computer system, eliminating fees, creating new application materials, and establishing a customer driven approach to licensing, I am pleased to say that OFC has changed licensing for the better.

When I started in this position three years ago, I wanted to make a difference and to leave the agency in better shape than when I arrived. I believe I have realized both of these goals and the time has come for me to move forward to my next challenge.

Thank you for helping to make this one of the most rewarding and memorable experiences of my career.

Sincerely,



Virginia Melendez
Commissioner

PROVIDER MAIL

Thank you for writing to us. Below is a sample of your letters.



"I filed my application for teacher qualification expecting to be director qualified but instead I received a certificate for lead teacher preschool -- what happened?"

Editor: Occasionally, OFC receives a request for certification but the documentation submitted does not support the desired qualification level. OFC reviews all of the information submitted and issues a certificate for the highest possible qualification level. Please be sure to send all relevant information when applying for a certificate.

"If I am currently a licensed family day care provider, why do I have to file an application to become an OFC Approved Assistant?"

Editor: Good news. As of February 15, 1996, anyone with a current family day care license is automatically qualified as an approved assistant.

GOVERNOR WELD'S VISIT TO CHILD CARE CENTER

(continued from page 1)

The Governor's fiscal year 1997 budget request will provide a 25% increase in the "income eligible" day care slots, making a total of more than 12,000 day care slots available to low-income working families. The funding increase will also provide a total of 34,000 day care slots for families leaving welfare for work.

"Now that we're implementing our welfare reform law, thousands more mothers will be needing day care so that they can move into the workplace. And it's only fair that we give hard-working parents who have never resorted to welfare the same break," Weld said.

Weld noted that this budget increase would bring the total number of state-funded child care slots to 52,000 -- an increase of 57% from two years ago.

"Massachusetts has an exceptionally strong commitment to funding child care. It's pro-child and pro-work -- and it puts us a step ahead of our competitor states," said Secretary of Health and Human Services Gerald Whitburn.

Frieda Garcia, Executive Director of the USES Center noted the impact that the increases in day care will have, "The Governor's visit to our child care center highlights the importance of these services. By increasing child care funding, many more parents will be able to afford quality child care for their children."

SUBSTITUTE CARE REENGINEERING

The Office for Children is reviewing and reengineering its substitute care licensing program. The goal is to improve services, reduce administrative costs and increase the overall efficiency of the licensing process.

Beginning March 1, 1996, OFC will have new forms and procedures for conducting random reviews of children's records and personnel records during a licensing study. All programs will receive copies of the new forms including a new checklist.

NEW GROUP DAY CARE LICENSE RENEWAL POLICY

To ensure timely license renewals and avoid occasional delays, OFC implemented a new group day care renewal policy effective February 23, 1996 that rests on unannounced health and safety visits.

The new policy is designed to provide a timely and efficient renewal experience for group day care licensees who have a satisfactory licensing history and who are in compliance or substantial compliance during the unannounced health & safety visit. It explains the criteria OFC uses to determine whether an unannounced health & safety visit can be used as a renewal study for programs that are in the license renewal phase.

OFC will send a copy of the "Group Day Care License Renewal Policy" included in a package of information containing the new materials and regulations for "Staff Qualifications."

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS CHANGES

(continued from page 1)

educational options and stronger work experience standards.

The Office for Children filed changes as "emergency regulations" in November so they would be effective immediately. This provided clear direction to child care workers trying to plan their educational curricula and enabled this agency to test the new staff qualifications system during the ninety day public comment period.

OFC held a public hearing on January 9, 1996 which resulted in comments aimed primarily at the use of continuing education units (CEUs) and age issues. These comments resulted in several newspaper articles, letters to OFC, letters to various legislators, and correspondence to the Governor's Office.

OFC amended and finalized the emergency regulations to include the following: to keep the age requirement for an entry level teacher position at 18 years of age; allow CEUs, obtained in cohesive units of 4, to be used in exchange for college credit; strengthen the work experience requirement for Lead Teachers to require that the additional 15 months of supervised experience must be as a Teacher qualified person or a Family Day Care Provider; and add staff supervision and child care policy to the course content choices in the Director category.

The final regulations offer added flexibility that should alleviate some barriers to movement in the early childhood field

while maintaining high standards. The final regulations became effective on February 23, 1996. OFC will send out copies of the final regulations to all licensed day care centers.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND ASIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES

African-American and Asian training conferences focusing on leadership in the field of early childhood will be held across the state this spring.

A conference will be held in Lowell for Asian child care professionals this spring. Specific sites in Boston, Springfield and Brockton will be chosen to host conferences for African-American early childhood professionals.

The training sessions will count toward OFC requirements and will offer a forum for early childhood professionals to enhance their skills and develop a greater network of providers in the community they serve.

OFC met with African-American early childhood professionals to identify the professional development and training needs of providers.

For specific dates and locations of these conferences, please contact your local child care resource and referral agency.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE -- FAMILY CHILD CARE EXPANSION BILL

Legislation to allow an increase in the number of children allowed in a family day care home is still in the State Senate. As of March 1, 1996, the bill was under consideration by the Senate.

If you want to offer support for the bill, H. 4303, you may call or write to your state senator. The main telephone number for the Senate Clerk's Office is (617) 722-1276.



Reminder: Until the law and the regulations are changed, the maximum number of children that may be cared for in family child care is six.

NEW FAMILY DAY CARE CHANGE OF ADDRESS POLICY

The task of moving to a new home is often difficult for anyone, but for family child care providers the burden is even greater because they must also move their business. Realizing this difficulty, the Office for Children implemented a new policy in February 1996 to ease the transition to a provider's new family day care home.

Under the policy providers must notify the Office prior to moving and resuming child care, however, OFC will no longer require an application fee. The Office for Children will amend the license and conduct a visit to ensure the new home is in compliance with licensing standards.

APPROVED ASSISTANT STATUS NOW AUTOMATIC FOR LICENSED PROVIDERS

As part of a continuing effort to offer quality customer service, the Office for Children implemented a new policy which affects family day care providers. The new policy now recognizes licensed providers can work as approved assistants in another family day care home without requiring an additional application or \$50 fee.

A family day care license will serve as documentation that the provider is certified not only at the licensed address, but also is qualified as an approved assistant to work in any other licensed home.

Any provider who wants her/his name to be given out to the public as an approved assistant should notify the appropriate child care resource and referral agency. The agency will add the information to its public referral list.

Providers occasionally choose to stop offering care before their license expires. As a licensed provider you may now use your license to work as an approved assistant after notifying your OFC licensor that you will no longer be offering care in your home. OFC will document the provider status as "inactive," however, you may continue to work as an approved assistant using your valid license number.

The process for those who want to become an approved assistant and not a family day care providers remains the same.

If you have questions about this policy, please contact your licensor.

SCHOOL AGE CHILD CARE INITIATIVE

The Office for Children in coordination with Wellesley School Age Child Care Project will produce School Age Child Care Technical Assistance Papers to assist new and existing programs. The papers are designed as a tool providers can use to enhance their programs and will focus on the following areas:

- Getting Started
- Developing a High Quality Program
- Policy, Legal and Licensing Issues
- Serving Children with Special Needs
- Serving Older Children
- Collaborative Strategies for School Age Child Care in Public Schools
- Professionalism
- Resource Development

The School Age Child Care Technical Assistance Papers will be distributed to licensed school age child care programs beginning in the summer and will be available to new programs through child care resource and referral agencies.

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

The Earned Income Credit (EIC) is a special tax benefit for people working full or part time earning low or moderate incomes. The EIC has many important purposes: reducing the tax burden on working families, supplementing wages and making work more attractive than welfare.



Did you work during 1995? You may be eligible for the Earned Income Credit. If you qualify, you will owe less in taxes and you may get cash back. Even if you do not owe income tax, you must file a federal tax return to get the EIC.

Examples:

- If you were raising one child in your home and your family earned less than \$24,396 in 1995, you may be eligible for up to \$2,094.
- If you were raising more than one child and you family earned less than \$26,673 in 1995, you may be eligible for up to \$3,110.
- If you were not raising a child, are between the ages of 25 and 64 and earned less than \$9,230, you may be eligible for up to \$314.

To receive the Earned Income Credit, simply file a federal income tax return (Form 1040A or 1040, not 1040EZ) and attach "Schedule EIC" to your tax return. For more information, call the IRS toll-free at 1-800-829-1040.

STATE GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION PLAN

Governor William F. Weld and Lieutenant Governor Argeo Paul Cellucci proposed a plan to restructure state government in fiscal year 1997 which begins July 1, 1996. The plan would decrease the number of secretariats from 11 to 6 and would consolidate many state agencies.

Under the proposal, the OFC licensing function and the Department of Social Services would be consolidated to a new Department of Children's Services in the newly created Family Services Secretariat.

The plan calls for OFC's child care licensing function to remain unchanged. Other aspects of licensing would be integrated with the quality assurance function of DSS. Most investigations would be transferred to Family Services (formerly Health & Human Services), but some of the components may also be integrated into quality assurance.

The reorganization plan must be approved by the legislature. OFC will keep you informed as new information becomes available.

SAFETY TIPS

- ★ Check fencing for broken sections and make certain that the fence is secure.
- ★ Check play ground equipment for sharp edges, rough surfaces and loose or broken parts.

OFC LICENSED PROGRAMS

(statistics as of March 1996)

Family Day Care

#	10,864	Total Capacity	57,623
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Group Day Care

#	2162	Total Capacity	95,197
---	------	----------------	--------

School Age Care

#	555	Total Capacity	24,265
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Substitute Care

(Shelter & Group Care only)

#	649	Total Capacity	6,977
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SUGGESTION BOX

Please take a moment to write us a short note with your suggestions or comments. We value your input, and we want to hear from you, especially those who have never written to us. As always, we appreciate your candid comments on child care.

Please mail comments to:

Office for Children
Attn: Chris Kealey
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

OFFICE FOR CHILDREN
1 ASHBURTON PLACE
BOSTON, MA 02108

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Office for Children

William F. Weld, Governor

Argeo Paul Cellucci, Lt. Governor

Gerald Whitburn, Secretary

Virginia Melendez, Commissioner

The Office for Children newsletter is published quarterly.

Christopher Kealey, Editor

.....

Dear Commissioner,



OFFICE FOR CHILDREN

CHILD CARE DIALOGUE

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
COLLECTION

OCT 22 1997

University of Massachusetts
Depository Copy

Summer 1996, Vol. 12

RECENT MEDIA ATTENTION ON OFC CORI PROCESS

The Office for Children was recently featured in a page one story focusing on waivers granted to family day care homes for disqualifying criminal backgrounds (mainly involving household members of family day care providers). An editorial entitled, "Day care in danger," discussed CORI waivers, teacher qualification regulations, training and the OFC budget. Together the stories imply that day care can be risky and that OFC was short of resources.

Neither report told the whole story and we especially felt sorry that parents may have been caused unnecessary worry. We want to emphasize our confidence in family day care providers and feature some of the points that were overlooked by the media.

- there are 10,864 family day care homes in Massachusetts run by dedicated, professional child care providers and of these only 1 caregiver has a criminal record that was "waived" by the Office for Children.
- the waivers granted by OFC were done by a committee which reviewed documentation and references showing rehabilitation of the offender, as well as the circumstances of the case.

- the OFC budget has remained essentially level over the last couple of years. We have even added some new staff during that time. Governor Weld had requested an annualized increase of \$800,000 for licensing in FY97. Unfortunately, the legislature will not be including this increase in OFC's FY97 budget.

- *Working Mother Magazine* regularly examines the status of day care in all fifty states. In its June 1996 edition, Massachusetts again ranks in the top ten for its quality, availability, safety and overall commitment to child care.

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COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

Dear Child Care Professional,

In April 1996, Governor Weld appointed me Acting Commissioner at the Office for Children, and I would like to introduce myself to you as well as share some of my thoughts about the future.

Before being appointed Acting Commissioner, I served for three years as the OFC Deputy Commissioner and General Counsel. Prior to joining OFC, I had held positions in government and in legal services that enabled me to work on behalf of children and families.

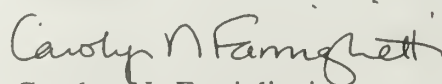
I bring to my new role as Acting Commissioner an understanding of the difficulties and challenges facing providers, children, parents and the Office for Children. To best meet the challenges facing all of us in the child care field, I will need to rely on your continued support and suggestions.

Right now we are faced with challenges such as conducting a full review of our regulations, working through various government reorganization plans and finalizing the state budget. We are working to improve our CORI and teacher qualification processes to enhance our services.

I am pleased to have the opportunity in my role as Acting Commissioner to serve the Office for Children at this critical juncture. I look forward to working with you to support the needs of children and families in Massachusetts.

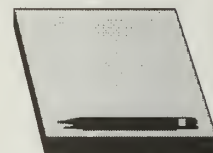
Have a terrific summer!

Sincerely,


Carolyn N. Famiglietti
Acting Commissioner

PROVIDER MAIL

Thank you for writing to us. Below is a sample of your letters.



"I received two phone calls specifically trying to sell magazines or toys for day care. My phone number is non-published. Has OFC supplied my number to any distributors?"

Editor: No. OFC deletes unlisted phone numbers from its public lists. Addresses and phone numbers of licensed child care providers in Massachusetts are considered by law public information. OFC does provide these lists to the public (including companies) for a fee to cover printing costs. Only a small number of groups and individuals obtain lists regularly.

"I have a license for my first floor and my basement. Could my friend who has a license use my upstairs to run a separate day care [keeping the programs separate]?"

Editor: No. Under family day care law there can only be one licensed day care in each private residence. The maximum number of children is now 6 although there is legislation pending that would increase the maximum to 10 (see next page for an update on the legislation.) Since this can be a confusing topic, we urge you to consult your licenser with questions about your specific circumstances.

FAMILY DAY CARE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS REMINDER

A few areas of the state have reported that some family child care providers have not obtained the required 15 hours of training by their renewal date. This failure to acquire training to meet state standards causes numerous problems for providers including a significant delay at license renewal time. In some cases, providers have lost food program reimbursements due to the delay.

It is extremely important to remember that the training required under the regulations is on-going. Each provider is responsible to obtain 15 hours of approved training during the three year period between license renewals.

Many providers develop their own schedule or plan as to when they will attend various trainings. Some choose to obtain the training five hours each year by attending a few of the hundreds of workshops, conferences and trainings which are often subsidized by OFC to reduce the cost to providers.

The trainings are meant to help providers stay informed about the very latest developments on a wide variety of topics in the field of early childhood. It also offers providers a good opportunity to network with other caregivers in the community.

If you have any questions about the requirements, please contact your licensor. For information about training in your area, please contact your child care resource and referral agency.

FAMILY CHILD CARE EXPANSION BILL

Legislation to increase the number of children allowed in certain family day care homes is still in the State Senate. As of May 29, 1996, the bill (H. 4303) was in the Senate Committee for Bills in Third Reading (617) 722-1470.



Reminder: Until the law and the regulations are changed, the maximum number of children that may be cared for in family child care is six.

OFC LICENSED PROGRAMS

(statistics as of April 1996)

Family Day Care

#	10,864	Total Capacity	57,623
---	--------	----------------	--------

Group Day Care

#	2162	Total Capacity	95,197
---	------	----------------	--------

School Age Care

#	555	Total Capacity	24,265
---	-----	----------------	--------

Substitute Care

(Shelter & Group Care only)

#	649	Total Capacity	6,977
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TIPS FOR SUMMER SAFETY

With summer now in full swing, many programs take advantage of the nice weather with a wide variety of activities, field trips and outdoor adventures.

A favorite outing for many child care providers is to seek relief from the heat by taking field trips to pools, ponds and beaches throughout the state. These trips offer some of the best summer fun for

kids. The Office for Children wants to help make sure that these trips continue to be the fun and exciting adventures they can be by offering some simple, common sense tips and reminders on how to keep kids safe.



WATER SAFETY

Before your trip:

- ★ All children should have signed permission slips from their parents before any trip.
- ★ Choose a safe place for water recreation which has qualified lifeguards on duty.
- ★ Make sure all staff members understand the swimming ability of each child.
- ★ Establish what to do in an emergency, be prepared with lists of emergency phone numbers, first aid materials and sun block.

Once you have arrived at a site, proper supervision of children in and out of the water is absolutely essential. It is imperative that staff members are trained, know their responsibilities and keep constant count of the children. Review the rules of the specific facility, plus your own safety rules with all the children.

Supervision suggestions:

- ★ Staff should be assigned specific duties (e.g. trips to the bathroom, snackbar) which rotate approximately every half an hour.
- ★ Have a person(s) always standing at the water's edge to serve as an extra set of eyes.
- ★ Staff should be responsible for supervising certain children. Where age appropriate, establish a buddy system, where each child has a partner for the outing.

OTHER SUMMER SAFETY TIPS

- ★ Be sure that no water is allowed to collect in buckets or other areas that are accessible to children.
- ★ Be sure staff know the various abilities and limitations of each child prior to going on any field trip, especially one involving water.
- ★ Be sure that play structures are free of hazards such as splinters, protruding nails and screws. Also, the ground underneath (e.g. wood chips, sand) should be soft enough to absorb a fall without causing serious injury.

ATTENTION ALL OFC LICENSED PROGRAMS

OFC is currently reviewing all its regulations including group day care, family day care, school age child care, temporary shelter, adoption and foster care placement agencies, group care and transitional housing for teenage parents.

Governor William F. Weld and Lieutenant Governor Argeo Paul Cellucci recently issued Executive Order No. 384 which requires all state agencies in Massachusetts to review and modernize all state regulations. This Order is an attempt to reduce the burden caused by outdated and unnecessary regulations which no longer serve their intended purpose, while at the same time enhancing those regulations that are essential for the public good.

Officials at the Office for Children will thoroughly review the ten sets of regulations now under our jurisdiction. Our goal will be to improve the current regulations by presenting them in a clear, concise manner making it easier for all OFC licensed programs to understand and comply with the standards. We will focus on enhancing areas where the Office for Children regulations are difficult to read, interpret and implement, as well as areas of excessive repetition.

Like every other state agency, the Office for Children will be examining circumstances where our regulations impose a differing or even inconsistent requirement from that of some other state agency. We will also review the regulations to determine that the costs associated with meeting the standards do not exceed the intended benefits that result from the regulations.

Because this regulatory review impacts your business, we hope Office for Children license holders (and other interested parties) will take this opportunity to submit written comments regarding the specific areas of review covered by the Executive Order. Due to the volume of materials which must be reviewed as part of this process, the Office for Children will not be able to respond individually to your recommendations. However, any comments submitted will be given all appropriate consideration toward final recommendations for change.

On the next page is a list of the three categories on which the regulation review is based. If you need more space to write your comments, please feel free to attach an extra sheet of paper. Please note that the Office is not soliciting proposals to change its basic policies, but rather on the way its regulations express or implement those policies.

We appreciate your candid responses based on your experience with one or more sets of the Office for Children regulations. If you have other suggestions for improvements to the regulations that fall into one of the three categories listed on the next page, please share those with us as well. Thank you in advance for helping us with this important project.

REGULATION SURVEY

Note: Please offer your comments and suggestions focusing on the three main categories listed below. By sharing your observations and experience with the OFC regulations you are helping us to improve the standards for all licensed programs. We apologize for the short notice, however we would appreciate receiving comments by July 12, 1996. You may choose to remain anonymous. Thank you.

Name (person submitting comments):

Name of your organization:

Address:

READABILITY (e.g. certain sections too complex)

INCONSISTENT REGULATIONS (e.g. certain sections at odds with other state regulations)

COST/BENEFIT CONCERNS (e.g. certain sections inhibit growth, job creation, etc.)

Please send this sheet with any supporting documentation to:

Office for Children
Attn: Marcia Farris
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

RATE INCREASE ANNOUNCED FOR VOUCHER PROVIDERS

The state announced in April 1996 that day care rates will be raised effective May 1, 1996 for many center-based providers who accept vouchers.



Those impacted by the rate increase are providers who are currently being paid the lowest voucher rates. Some providers who receive the lowest rates have not seen an increase since 1989.

This increase does not impact the rates for all providers, nor does it include those who accept contracted slots. It was decided that priority must be given to increase those at the lowest rates first.

State officials are working on a more comprehensive strategy to make raise reimbursement rates and make the system more equitable for all providers.

Governor Weld and Lieutenant Governor Cellucci also requested an additional \$50 Million for fiscal year 1997 to create 10,000 new day care slots.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH IN CHILD CARE

The search to study and define quality child care has become a favorite topic of research projects at colleges, universities and public policy forums over the last few years. Many of you may have no doubt received surveys and questionnaires requesting information about your program's mission, structure, numbers of children served and staffing.

With all the demands placed on your time as a child care professional, research requests can occasionally seem too burdensome. However, research projects often provide new insights into the challenges facing early care educators. The studies also help focus much needed attention on the issues and problems that confront caregivers, parents, policy makers and most of all children.

We encourage you to participate in legitimate research projects whenever possible. Your input is valuable, and your contributions could well have an important impact on future planning in the areas of accreditation, regulatory standards and training requirements in the child care field.

SUGGESTION BOX

Please take a moment to write to Acting Commissioner Carolyn Famiglietti with any suggestions or comments about how the Office for Children can better meet the needs of children, parents and providers throughout the state.

Please mail comments to:

Office for Children
Attn: Chris Kealey
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

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Dear Commissioner,



OFFICE FOR CHILDREN

CHILD CARE DIALOGUE

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Fall 1996, Vol. 13

LARGE FAMILY DAY CARE BILL BECOMES LAW

On August 7, 1996, Governor Weld signed legislation that allows the Office for Children to create a new category of child care called "Large Family Day Care."

Under this new category, certain caregivers will be able to care for up to ten children in a family day care home when an approved assistant is present.



The bill contains specific requirements that must be included when new regulations are developed. Anyone applying for this new type of license must:

- Have at least three years of experience in licensed family child care.
- Complete at least five hours of specialized training prior to licensure as a large family day care provider.
- Complete ten hours of appropriate training each subsequent year.

Beyond these requirements, OFC will need to write regulations covering space criteria, staff/child ratios, and standards for approved assistants.

The bill also allows the Office to establish a pilot program that may allow for some exemptions from the requirements of the LFDC license, specifically in the area of after-school care.

Originally, the bill required that OFC report the results of the pilot program to the legislature by September 30, 1996. But when the bill did not pass during the 1995 legislative session the implementation date was moved back. The final version of the law gives OFC until November, 1997 to write the regulations. OFC plans to begin the pilot program once the regulations are promulgated. As soon as the Office has decided what the pilot will include, we will be informing providers and looking for volunteer participants.

The Office reminds all providers that even though the bill has been signed into law, it

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will take one year before all the new standards are ready, and no change to the six child maximum will occur until there are new standards. Until then, no one can be licensed to care for more than six children.

COMMISSIONER'S CORNER


Dear Child Care Professional,

Massachusetts has long been recognized as one of the nation's leaders in child care. The reputation has been achieved through the tireless work and dedication of you, the Commonwealth's child care professionals. Equal to your dedication is that of the staff of the Office for Children. I have recently been appointed Commissioner and my first and constant priority will be to give you and this Office all the support I can to foster the safety and well being of children.

I am an attorney with eleven years experience, the bulk of it spent in human services. I am passionately committed to public service. I left a well-paying private sector job nine years ago and have never looked back. I could not be happier or more proud of the work I have done, especially at the Department of Transitional Assistance where I gained extensive experience in child welfare issues.

I have much to learn in my new role. I will offer leadership and hard work, but will need input and feedback from all of you to be successful. I am open to your thoughts and ideas and am eager to hear from you. I look forward to a partnership with you in the years ahead.

Sincerely,



Ardith Wieworka
Commissioner
(617) 727-8900



Ardith Wieworka
Commissioner

PROVIDER MAIL

Thank you for writing to us.

"I have just gone through the relicensing process for my family day care home. The licensor was such a pleasure to work with. She was very helpful & informative, sharing a lot of her experiences with children. The new combined permissions is great. Having the provider complete the child care record chart before the visit is such a great idea. With this done beforehand it allows time for a more relaxed visit. Thank you for making it easier to renew our licenses!"

Editor: The Office is pleased that the family day care revisioning process has been so successful. The family day care revisioning team worked hard to make improvements.

REGULATION REVIEW

In response to Executive Order 384, issued by Governor William F. Weld, the Office for Children is conducting a review of each of its regulations. We would like to thank everyone who took the time to respond to the article about this in the last OFC newsletter and to provide us with comments and suggestions.

Many of the comments focused on the complexity of the regulations. To address this, we redesigned them so related regulations are found in one place. We also placed in one central location those regulations that are the same in multiple sets of regulations. We have combined group day care and school age child care; foster and adoption placement; and group care and temporary shelters.

Our intent is to preserve the substance of the regulations, neither to raise nor to lower standards, while making them easier for providers, families, funders, and others to understand and to use. We see this as a way to improve compliance with the regulations and ultimately improve services to children.

Copies of the draft regulations may be picked at the OFC Regional Offices or mailed to you by calling 617-727-8900. Specify which regulations you would like to receive. Copies will also be available at all five child care conferences held on October 26, see page 4.

Written comments are welcome and may be submitted to Marcia Farris, OFC, 1 Ashburton Place, Boston, Mass. 02108. The public comment period is now scheduled to close October 29, 1996.

Public Hearings Schedule

October 28, 1996

Region I

1:00-4:00 OFC Regional Office
15 Mulberry St. Springfield

7:00-9:00 Holyoke Community College
Frost Building, Room 309
President's Conference Center
Parking in lots K & L

Region II

1:00 - 4:00, 7:00 - 9:00
Worcester Public Library Saxe Room
3 Salem Square, Worcester

Region III

1:00 - 4:00, 7:00 - 9:00
OFC Regional Office
66 Cherry Hill Drive, Beverly

Region V

1:00 - 4:00, 7:00 - 9:00
OFC Regional Office
109 Rhode Island Road, Lakeville

Region VI

1:00 - 4:00 Boston
OFC Regional Office
24 Farnsworth Street, Room 4a

7:00 - 9:00 same address
Room 1c and d

October 29, 1996 Central Office

1:00 - 4:00 Boston
One Ashburton Place, 21st floor

Interpreters will be available for the hearing impaired. Please contact Marcia Farris at 617-727-8900, Ext. 158 by October 21, 1996. If this or any other accommodations required. All locations are wheelchair accessible.

OCTOBER 26 FILLED WITH TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Copies of the draft regulations will be available at the following child care conferences held Saturday, October 26. Take the time to discuss the regulations with your colleagues.

●BAEYC/MADCA Fall Conference
UMass Boston, Harbor Campus
Contact BAEYC 617-536-2574

●MetroWestAEYC/Child Care Search
Framingham State College, Framingham
Contact Rosemary at 508-263-7744

●Providers Food Program Conference
Sheraton Tara, Framingham
Contact Ruth Dain at 800-487-9190

●Child Care Resources/MAEYC
Mt. Wachusett Comm, College, Gardner
Contact Kathy at 508-343-7395

●Resources for Child Care
Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield
Contact Mary Jo at 413-443-7869

C D A: ADVISOR TRAINING

Are you interested in serving as an advisor to those working on a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential?

To be an advisor you need a CDA, Associates or Bachelor's degree in early childhood education and have experience supervising and teaching adults.

For more information, send a resume with current mailing address to: Office for Children, CDA Advisor Training, One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM LAUNCHED

The Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential is awarded to child care providers who have demonstrated their skill in working with young children and their families. Scholarships are available from the Office for Children to income eligible applicants for the CDA assessment

fee of \$325.00.

The Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition operates the CDA credentialing program as a major national effort to improve the quality of child care.

Focusing on the skills of child care providers, the

program is designed to provide performance-based training, assessment and credentialing for center-based infant/toddler and preschool teachers and family child care providers.

The CDA is recognized by the Office for Children in Group Day Care regulations towards Lead Teacher qualifications. The Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies offer series of workshops based on CDA topics and can help candidates work with an advisor.

For more information about the program and an application for the scholarship, call 617-727-8900 ext. 129 and leave your name and address. Or write to OFC, CDA Scholarship, One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108



TEACHER QUALIFICATION REGULATIONS CHANGE EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 16

The teacher qualifications in group day care regulations are changing, effective October 16. This insert gives a summary of the new regulations. Save it for handy reference. Hearings on these new regulations will held at the same time as the regulations review, October 28 & 29, 1996. Applicants can apply under the old or new regulations until the end of 1996, then only the new regulations, summarized here are in effect. There will be no fee for the certifications under the new regulations. New application forms will be available when the new regulations become effective.

HOME STUDY OR DISTANCE LEARNING OPTIONS



The Office for Children accepts college credits or CEU's earned through home study courses, also called distance learning. Training approved for CEUs may substitute for

college credit towards Lead Teacher and Director certifications. Correspondence courses can offer more options to providers seeking training. You can begin a course when you are ready rather than be locked into the college semester calendar and the courses are as close as your mail box. Administration or director courses are sometimes difficult to find. Two courses which are available are Administration of Child Care at the University of Wisconsin or Administration

of ECE at California College for Health Science. You can find out more about other courses by checking the MacMillan Guide to Correspondence Courses. A reference librarian can help you find the information.

Where can I find an infant/toddler course?

This is a common question. The course is not given as often as other early childhood education courses. The infant/ toddler course required to be Lead Teacher/Infant Toddler qualified may be met by taking 4 CEU's such as Infant Development (1 CEU) & Toddler Development (1 CEU) at Community Care for Kids, and Enter Toddlng (1 CEU) & Terrific Twos (1 CEU) at National Coalition for Early Childhood Professionals. You may also qualify by taking a 3-credit college course such as ECE 120 Infant & Toddler from California College. For more information see the Home Study Options on the back of this insert..

Some Home Study NOT Accepted

Home study programs that are NOT accepted by the Office for Children to meet staff qualifications or family day care training hours, include:

- ▶ C.A.R.E. Courses in Dallas, TX
- ▶ Professional Career Development Institute in Atlanta, GA.
- ▶ ICS Learning Systems, Child Day Care Course, in Scranton, PA.

None of these trainings are approved for CEUs or offer college credit. Group day care providers can check with their licenser to see if the training hours apply to the annual in-service requirements.

Teacher The required course is Child Growth and Development (3 credits), also called child psychology or developmental psychology. The first semester of a two semester course in Human Growth and Development is acceptable. College Level Examination Program (CLEP) are accepted with passing grade for Child Development. For more information about this program contact 609-951-1026. Introduction to Psychology or Adolescent Psychology are not accepted.

Lead Teacher A total of 12 credits in four topics in early childhood education, including the 3 credits for Child Growth and Development or Child Development Associate (CDA) is required. For Preschool Certification, at least 2 credits must be in Program Planning, Curriculum or Classroom Managements. For Infant/Toddler Certification, at least 3 credits must be in Infant and Toddler Care.

Director I At least 2 credits in Day Care Administration and 2 more credits in early childhood education.

Director II 2 credits in Advanced Day Care Administration, Supervision, Day Care Policy, Families & Community, Health and Safety (not First Aid), Special Needs.

For more information about training available in your community call the child care resource and referral agency in your area at 1-800-345-0131.

WORK EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

How to read the chart: Read down the column on the left, until you find the highest level of educational qualification that you have completed (college transcripts must indicate the date degree was completed or degree awarded), then read across the row for the requirements of the qualification levels.

Work Experience by highest degree completed	Teacher-I/T & PS 21 yrs old or have High School Diploma	Lead Teacher- Infant/Toddler (I/T) and Preschool (PS) 21 yrs old and have High School Diploma	Director I	Director II
High School or G.E.D.	9 months, at least 3 months with other age group for both levels	27 months after meeting Teacher, at least 9 months with other age group for both I/T and PS (A total of 36 months)	six months after meeting lead teacher qualifications	none
High School Child Care Program	Fulfill requirements of program	27 months after completing high school program, at least 9 months with other age group for both I/T and PS.		
Certificate program i.e. CDA or Montessori	Fulfill requirements of certificate program	27 months, at least 9 months with other age group for both I/T and PS certification		
Associate's Degree in ECE or related field	3 months for each age level	18 months, at least 9 months with other age group for both I/T and PS certification (or 1 practicum with each age group)		
Bachelor's Degree in ECE or related field	3 months for each age level	9 months or one practicum		

HOME STUDY OPTIONS FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

All college courses are 3 credits, unless otherwise noted; all CEU courses are 1 CEU = 10 hours, unless otherwise noted.

NAME OF PROGRAM	COURSES and CREDITS	COST	FOR MORE INFORMATION
Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies	Family Child Care Health and Safety Half CEU (5 hours of training)	\$29.95	Training Coordinator at the CCR&R see list on reverse side
Community Care For Kids	Child Development Series Approved for CEUs Infant Development Toddler Development Preschool Development School Age Development (in process)	\$39.95 for each course plus cost of books	Carla Steen Community Care for Kids 800-637-2011 or 617-471-6473 ext 122
Nat'l Coalition for Early Childhood Professionals (NCECP), Members Only Distance Learning Video CEU Courses in partnership with Self-Dimensions	Creating Environments for Learning & Play Schedules & Routine Enter Toddling: Successful Programming Terrific Twos PLUS MANY OTHERS Self Esteem I & II	\$32 for 3-week or \$10 for 3-day rental plus \$10 portfolio review fee	To Arrange Training or For More Information, Call 617-279-4658 Membership is \$25 per year
Professional Development Certification by Early Childhood News, CEUs in association with University of Wisconsin-Stout	Three Modules each year on Relationships Leadership Partnership	\$59 or \$49* for 1 CEU or \$79 or \$69* or 3 CEU's	Early Childhood News, P.O.Box 49579, Dayton, OH 45449-0579 To register by phone, 800-523-4625 *Group-if one or more register with you, there is a savings of \$10 each
University of Massachusetts, Cooperative Extension Service CEU approved by MassAEYC	Nutrition for Young Children	\$20	Nancy Stutzman, Eastern Mass. Cooperative Extension, 617-891-0650
University of Wisconsin, Independent Study (Other courses available, not listed due to space)	Family Day Care, 1credit (15 hrs) Intro. to FDC Settings, 2.4 CEUs F D C as a Profession, 2.4 CEUs ECE for Child Care Teachers Child Development Administration of Child Care	\$106 \$ 50 Add \$36. for \$ 50 administration \$318 fee and books \$318 cost begin at \$318 \$10.50	Independent Study Office Ask for Catalog and Registration Materials 608-262-2011 or 800-442-6460 or e-mail ILEARN@admin.uwex.edu
Calif. College for Health Sci. 222 West 24th Street National City, CA 91950	ECE 100 Child Development ECE 115 Curriculum for ECE ECE 120 Infant & Toddler ECE 121 Administration of ECE	\$335 per 3 credits	Admissions Office 800-221-7374 ext 369 or 362 or 355 or 350

CHART OF PROFESSIONAL CHILD CARE QUALIFICATIONS

Definitions:

Certificate Program. The Child Development Associate (CDA), Montessori certificate, or alternative early childhood teacher preparation program which combines post-secondary education, and practicum. The Certificate meets the education requirements for Lead Teacher.

Continuing Education Unit. An Early Childhood Continuing Education Unit (CEU) is recognition for participation in a post-secondary early childhood learning program designed for staff at day care centers. One CEU is granted for 10 contact hours. CEUs must be approved by organizations designated by the Office. There are two organizations that approve training for CEU's in Early Childhood Education, Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children (MassAEEYC) 508-756-0996 and the National Coalition for Early Childhood Professionals 617-284-6092.

Practicum. The successful completion of a minimum of 150 hours, over at least an eight week period, of direct work with infants and toddlers or preschoolers, supervised by personnel from an institution of higher learning or an alternative early childhood training program, with at least three site visits, including conferencing, and placement with a lead teacher qualified staff member. Responsibilities of the student intern shall include program planning, parent relations, and management of the whole group for a portion of the placement. The practicum must be with the appropriate chronological or developmental age to qualify staff to work with the corresponding age group. One practicum may substitute for nine months of work experience.

Related Field of Study. A program at an accredited institution of higher learning which includes the study of caregiving, development, education, health care, or psychology of children, birth to eight years of age, or provision of direct services to children and their families.

Work Experience. Supervised experience in providing direct care and teaching during all types of program activities to a group of children, one month to seven years of age, or special needs children up to age 16, at least 12 hours per week, on a regular basis, in a licensed group day care center, family day care home or equivalent program accepted by the Office in periods of at least four weeks in one program. Supervised work experience of less than 12 hours per week may count as follows: 50 hours of consistent work at one program is equivalent to one month of work experience. Work experience must be in a licensed group day care center, family day care home or equivalent program accepted by the Office. Work experience, whether paid or unpaid, in a center or family day care home must meet the staff development requirements of every other month observation and conferencing by at least a lead teacher qualified person.

EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

The coursework requirements are the same for all applicants. A Child Development Associate meets the training requirements for Lead Teacher. The amount of work experience depends on the highest degree which the applicant has completed, see chart below. Coursework must be met with college credit, 4 CEU's may substitute for 3 credits for Lead Teacher and all the credits at Director levels.

Assistant Teacher No certificate is issued at this level, assistant teachers must be at least 16 years of age and work under supervision of qualified teacher. Experience may be used to meet work experience requirements for teacher qualifications.

NEW CORI POLICY

On May 14, 1996, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services issued a policy intended to standardize the procedures regarding criminal history checks of anyone employed by or seeking licensure through any of its agencies. The Office for Children has implemented a policy conforming to these new standards. This policy applies to any OFC licensed program. It expands the categories of crimes that prohibit a person from holding a license; working with children in a licensed program; or being approved as foster parent. A new category, discretionary approval, requires the applicant to present "clear and convincing" evidence of his or her fitness for employment, licensure or approval.



A public hearing was held on August 16, 1996 to gather comment from affected persons. New regulations will be promulgated on September 20, 1996 reflecting the changes.

In Family Day Care, the policy has been implemented. A copy of the policy is being included with all new and renewal Family Day Care applications.

In Substitute Care, Group Day Care, and School Age Child Care, information and new CORI forms were mailed to all licensees in mid-September. These forms must be used as of October 1, 1996. If you have not received this mailing, please contact your licensor.

Copies of the policy may be obtained through your regional office. If you have questions, please call your licensor.

CCR&Rs CONNECT WITH NEW TELEPHONE # 800-345-0131

Better access for parents and providers

The statewide network of child care resource and referral



agencies just got

better with start-up funding from the Office for Children. Parents and providers can call the "smart" 800 telephone number, enter their zip code, and find the CCR&R that serves their area. For some, the call will be transferred immediately, in other locations, the caller will be given the information needed. Other features will be FAX-on-demand, a caller can select from a menu fact sheets that can be faxed to them. A public awareness campaign is planned for the new access to information.

PRODUCT SAFETY ALERT

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has announced that Gerber Products Co. is voluntarily recalling 60,000 units of one style of its Flip Fingers Rattle, with a red handle. The spherical ends of the rattles could come off and let loose small parts that present a choking or inhalation danger to small children.

The Commission advises consumers to take the rattles away from children immediately and call Gerber at (800) 4-GERBER (443-7237). Gerber will send consumers instructions for returning the rattles and obtaining a refund.

WORKING TOGETHER for CHILDREN and FAMILIES: Supporting Inclusive Child Care

Parents and representatives from various agencies within the state are collaborating to sponsor daylong forums at thirteen sites throughout the state. These events will help early care and education providers and family members to learn more about inclusive community programming for young children with disabilities. Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) in Massachusetts will facilitate the participation of parents, child care providers, public school early childhood personnel, Early Intervention providers and Head Start teachers at these forums. Participants will:

- Consider inclusion from a family's perspective.
- Use case studies and exercises.
- Learn about successful approaches.
- Hear discussion from local providers.
- Reflect on strategies for local implementation.

There is no cost for these forums. Professional Development Points (PDPs) and Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are available. Stipends will be provided for parents and family child care providers. Please take this opportunity to come together and share ideas, working models, best practices and resources, as well as renew old collaborations and forge new ones. The Forums are sponsored by the Departments of Education, Public Health, Social Services, Transitional Assistance, Executive Office of Health & Human Services, Federation for Children with Special Needs, Head Start, Massachusetts Network of CCR&Rs and the Office for Children. Contact your local CCR&R for more information.

CHILD CARE 2000

Child Care 2000, a five-year federally funded model demonstration project through the Office for Children has completed its first year. The project's goal is to increase opportunities for young children with disabilities and their families to access care in inclusive community based settings. In conjunction with our pilot Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs), the Child Care Resource Center and Child Care Choices of Boston, the project has:

- ★ Served 37 children with a variety of disabilities ranging from autism to cerebral palsy to ADHD.
- ★ Provided over 70 hours of on-site technical assistance to child care providers and nearly double that number of telephone hours.
- ★ Trained 245 early care and education providers in disability awareness, dealing with challenging behaviors, and differences in development.

As we begin our second year, we are working with other CCR&Rs to expand their capacity to offer enhanced referral services to families of children with disabilities. We are actively recruiting families, empowering them to seek high quality, inclusive child care for their children with disabilities. The project continues its support to providers caring for children with diverse abilities through on-site and telephone technical assistance. We look forward to another productive year of collaboration to meet the needs of children, families and providers.

For additional information contact Margaret C. O'Hare, Project Director, Child Care 2000 at 617-727-8900

SUBSTITUTE CARE REVISIONING UPDATE

In the winter edition of this newsletter OFC announced that it was piloting a new checklist for providers to use in preparing for a license renewal study. By now we had anticipated that this checklist would be implemented statewide across all substitute care programs. Other projects, including the regulation review mandated by Executive Order 384, have delayed the completion of our pilot test. The checklist will also need to be updated before full implementation.



The Governor's order to review and modernize all state regulations coincides well with the Office's revisioning process. Our goal is not only to improve the current regulations by presenting them in a clear and concise manner but also to develop a licensing process that will be more of a partnership with providers; acknowledge those providers that consistently maintain a high level of compliance and better focus our efforts on those providers who require additional assistance in achieving and maintaining compliance. The revised licensing process will also enable licensors' to more frequently visit programs, enhancing our field presence.

Once the regulation review process is complete, our efforts will be directed toward finalizing the revisioning process. Thanks to all sub-care providers who have cooperated with us in this effort to improve our licensing process.

TRANSPORTATION

During the summer, the State Legislature amended G.L. Chapter 90, Section 7D, the law that governs the transportation of children in vans, station wagons and sedans. The amendments do not affect the transportation of children on "fixed routes"; that is, the regularly scheduled transportation to and from a child's home or school to the child's day care center or school age child care program. Licensees must still comply with the 8 passenger limit, the school bus signs and lights and the other requirements of Section 7D on these "fixed routes." The new law does change the standards when children are taken on field trips by teachers. OFC is in the process of evaluating the impact of this change on its regulations. Meanwhile, it is recommended that licensees continue to comply with OFC's current policies or the Center's current policies on the transportation of children on field trips.

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SUGGESTION BOX

Please take a moment to write to Commissioner Ardith Wieworka with any suggestions or comments about how the Office for Children can better meet the needs of children, parents and providers throughout the state.

Please mail comment to:

Office for Children
Attn: Doug Pizzi
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108



OFFICE FOR CHILDREN
1 ASHBURTON PLACE
BOSTON, MA 02108



Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Office for Children

William F. Weld, Governor

Argeo Paul Cellucci, Lt. Governor

Joseph Gallant, Secretary

Ardith Wieworka, Commissioner

The Office for Children newsletter is published quarterly.

Thank you to Phil Baimas, Fran Barrett, Marcia Farris, Suzanne Gottlieb and Carol Randolph for their contributions to this issue. Karen Sheaffer and Leslie Candy, Editors

Dear Commissioner,

MASS HS 50.9: 14



OFFICE FOR CHILDREN

CHILD CARE DIALOGUE

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
COLLECTION

OCT 22 1997

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NEW REGULATIONS TO TAKE EFFECT IN MAY

The Office For Children has completed the regulation review process. OFC filed four new sets of regulations at the end of last year. These regulations will go into effect on May 1 (Summaries by program are included in this edition). This will give the office time to revise forms and applications, train licensors and provide information to all licensees.

In revising the regulations, one of the goals was to make it easier for all parties to understand and comply with the standards. OFC sought to simplify sections of the regulations that were difficult to read, interpret and implement.

Reorganization was another goal. OFC paid special attention to pulling together similar information that had been scattered throughout the regulations. For example, there are now new sections on information for parents, required policies, documentation required from parents and their children, required postings, and provider notifications to OFC.

Also, all of the rules that apply to all OFC licensed programs have been combined into a new set of regulations, 102 CMR 1.00: Enforcement Standards and Definitions for Licensure or Approval. It includes all Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI), legal actions OFC can take and the appeals process.

Elsewhere, the regulations for Group Day Care and School Age Child Care have been combined and can now be found under 102 CMR 7.00, formerly the Group Day Care regulations.

Regulations for Foster and Group Care and Placement Agencies Offering Adoption Services have also been combined. The new section is 102 CMR 5.00, Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Agencies Offering Child Placement and Adoption Services.

In addition, the regulations for Group Care and Temporary Shelter have been combined into a section called Standards for the Licensure or Approval of Residential Programs Serving Children and Teen Parents.

Programs and homes whose licenses will expire soon after May 1, 1997 will receive copies of the new regulations either with the renewal application or at renewal meetings. The new regulations will also be available at the State House Book Store sometime in April. The telephone number is 617-727-2834.

Also in April, the Office will be conducting regional training sessions for all programs. Contact your regional office for further information.

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COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

Well it's been about six months since I was appointed Commissioner and my ability to say, "I'm new," is quickly drawing to a close if it hasn't gone by the boards already.

One of my first priorities as Commissioner was to get out into the field where the rubber meets the road. I wanted to visit not only our employees, but also you, the care providers who are so crucial to our children's futures.

As of this date I have accomplished that goal, having visited our regional offices and many programs, ranging from family day care homes to residential treatment centers for juvenile offenders. I will continue to make these kinds of trips and have instructed all senior managers to do so as well. In order to be effective as administrators, we need to see what is going on in the real world.

Another goal I set when I became Commissioner was to let the taxpayers of this state know just what the Office for Children can do for them when it comes to fostering, finding and maintaining high quality child care. To that end, I have been travelling to news outlets around the state and meeting with reporters and editorial boards, hoping to get useful information out to the public. I think we have been reasonably successful in that endeavor.

I also want the Office to be responsive to providers' needs and concerns and to apply common sense to the regulatory process. Too many people have an image of OFC as a bunch of bureaucrats with tape measures. I want to focus on the quality of child care more than the minutia encased in our needed, but sometimes burdensome, regulations.

We're working hard to beat the November deadline to finish writing the regulations for Large Family Day Care. In fact, we hope to have the licenses ready

for issuance in the fall, the time when, historically, there is a heavier demand for day care.

I have also ended the practice of routinely giving out information about unfounded complaints. No provider's reputation should be damaged by complaints that prove groundless. I didn't empanel a blue ribbon commission to study the matter for six months. It made sense so I did it, effective immediately.

That's the way I want to approach all of the issues we come up against while I'm the Commissioner: determine what the problem is, look at the facts and fix it.

Of course, all of the problems we face are not that cut and dried. One issue for which I have put together a



Ardith Wieworka

committee is the issue of adoption. There's more about that committee later in this issue. But rest assured, this committee has not been empowered to study the issue to death. It has been empowered to see if there is a way to cut through some of the red tape inherent in the current process, yet still give adequate protection to the children placed for adoption as well as their birth and adoptive parents.

All in all I think it's safe to say that the Office is on the move in a very positive way. I think our successful effort at getting what we need to keep this momentum going included in the Governor's budget is further evidence that the Office is strong and getting stronger. Let's work together to keep it that way.

Sincerely,
Ardith

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

102 CMR 3.00: STANDARDS FOR THE LICENSURE OR APPROVAL OF RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS SERVING CHILDREN AND TEEN PARENTS

The following changes affect both group care and temporary shelter programs:

- *All policies and plans required for licensure will be required prior to provisional licensure. This expands the documentation required prior to first licensure. [3.03(1)(a)1 - 39]
- *Advisory board members may not be family members of the licensee or of employees of the licensee. [3.04(2)(d)]
- *Medication errors must be documented on an incident report. [3.04(3)(h)]
- *Programs will be required to notify the Office, and submit a plan for correction if, during the period of licensure, they are unable to renew building, fire or health inspection certificates. [3.04(5)(h)]
- *All staff must be oriented to the characteristics of children served by the program, and symptoms and behavioral signs of emotional disturbance. [3.04(7)(a)1]
- *Supervisors must have experience suitable to the responsibilities of the staff they supervise. [3.04(8)]
- *Services required at intake has been expanded for group care programs to include those services once mandated in shelters only. [3.05(3)(c & d)]
- *Programs may allow residents to self-administer medications, provided the licensee determines that the resident is able to be responsible and follow appropriate procedures for administration, storage and documentation. The program must provide some level of supervision and monitoring. [3.06(4)(k)1b]
- *Documentation required to support a variance request to allow a program of unusual or extraordinary treatment or to allow mechanical or chemical restraint has been removed from the regulations, and will be put in policy. [3.06(11), formerly 3.04(14)(b)]
- *Regulations re: "Mixing Children and Adults" have been changed. Rather than requiring separate programming for younger and older children, and prohibiting mixing of children and adults in room assignments, the new regulation requires room assignments and programming to be appropriate, considering the ages and needs of residents. [Room Assignment and Programming, 3.07(3)]
- *"Extensive separation from the group" is prohibited as a behavior management practice. [3.07(7)(g)]
- *Only staff trained in passive physical restraint may restrain children. [3.07(7)(j)3]
- *Visits to residents within the facility may be restricted based on a documented safety risk to residents or staff. [3.07(9)(c)3]
- *Telephone communications may be restricted, provided that such restrictions are reasonable. [3.07(9)(h)]

*The regulations now explicitly require all residents to wear seatbelts during transport, except in buses. [3.07(12)(f)]

*Documentation of fire drills must include the length of time required to evacuate. [3.08(2)(e)3]

*Sheets and pillow cases must be washed before use by another child. [3.08(7)(j)3]

The following change affects Shelter programs:

*The provision that children in shelter are there on a voluntary basis has been removed. [formerly 6.04(1)(d)]

The following changes affect Shelter Home programs:

*The orientation for shelter home parents must include information on CPR, the role and responsibilities of shelter home parents, and procedures to follow in the event a child runs away from the home. [3.09(4)]

*The general agreement between the program and shelter home parents must include a statement describing state law and agency requirements regarding child rearing and discipline practices.[3.09(9)(a)4]

*The individual child placement agreement between the program and shelter home parents must include a statement regarding arrangements for clothing for the child. [3.09(9)(b)10]

*The information provided to shelter home parents prior to placement of a child must include a description of any behavioral problems the child may have. [3.09(10)]

The following changes affect Group Care programs:

*All programs will be required to submit a written policy describing search procedures, if applicable. [3.03(1)(a)30]

*Staff orientation plans must specifically include runaway procedures, crisis intervention, procedures for reporting suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect, and training in universal precautions and infection control procedures. [3.04(7)(a)1]

*Minimum requirements for follow-up for a discharged resident will consist of one contact within one month of discharge, for each child in care more than 72 hours. [3.06(12)(a)]

*A staff person trained in CPR and first aid must be available in the facility at all times when children are present. [3.07(2)(c)]

*First aid kits must be checked and restocked regularly. [3.08(5)(k)]

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

102 CMR 5.00: STANDARDS FOR THE LICENSURE OR APPROVAL OF AGENCIES OFFERING CHILD PLACEMENT AND ADOPTION SERVICES

The following changes affect both foster care and adoption programs:

- *Licensees must notify the Office of a change in advanced degree supervisors within two weeks. [5.04(4)(d)]
- *The affirmative action policy required in personnel policies has been replaced by a non-discrimination statement. [5.04(5)(a)2]
- *Social work supervisors or staff must have knowledge of placement and family reunification. [5.05(2)]
- *Service plans must include documentation of persons responsible to provide services identified in the service plan. [5.07(12)(c)]
- *Any change in a child's placement must be based on a documented assessment of the child's needs. [5.08(16)(a)]
- *Specific requirements have been outlined for the adoptive and foster parent orientation (new for foster care), including the agency's philosophy and policy regarding discipline of children; information about separation and loss, and the circumstances under which children require placement; and the legal rights and responsibilities of foster and adoptive parents (new for adoption). [5.10(2)]
- *Factors to be considered when a child is placed in a foster or adoptive home include the current household composition. [5.08(6)]
- *Agencies must provide foster and adoptive parents with a copy of their homestudy on request. [5.10(5)(g)]

The following changes affect foster care programs:

- *Each program must have an advisory board of at least 4 persons, 3 of whom are not employees of the licensee, family members of the licensee or family members of employees, which shall meet at least annually to make recommendations regarding the licensee's program. [5.04(2)(d)]
- *The licensee must have a written plan for conducting investigations within the agency or in foster or adoptive homes supervised by the agency. [5.04(3)(d)]

* The licensee must have a written plan for staff to file 51A reports as mandated, and for notifying the Office of any 51A reports alleging abuse or neglect of a child placed in an adoptive home by the agency. [5.04(3)(e & f)]

*The licensee must maintain annual evaluations of staff, and must document training and disciplinary actions or investigations in staff records. [5.04(5)(h & i)]

*The licensee must have a written policy regarding financial responsibilities of all parties, as applicable. [5.04(7)]

*The provision of false or misleading information is prohibited. [5.04(8)]

* The requirement for consultation between social workers after each visit to the foster home has been eliminated in favor of "regular" consultation, and immediate consultation if any worker notes concerns in the home. [5.05(1)(c & d)]

*Supervisors must have three years' experience providing direct and clinical services to children and families. (5.05(2))

*Continuity of case management must be assured in the absence of the assigned social worker. [5.05(4)]

*Intake Evaluations must include documentation of special talents, abilities or interest of the child and birth family, and full names and ages of the parents, siblings and close relatives. [5.06(2)(c & g)]

*The requirement for documenting "most appropriate services, without regard to availability" has been eliminated. [formerly at 4.08(1)(a)]

*The interagency agreement between a placement agency and residential program must include arrangements for family visits and contacts between the resident and friends, including restrictions; and responsibility for: seeking judicial approval for antipsychotic medication; transportation; after care services. For children placed in shelter care, dates of service and discharge planning conferences must be documented. [5.08(4)]

* Interagency agreements for the placement of children must include procedures for information sharing between agencies. [5.08(5)(a)4]

*An agency must consider former or current foster parents as an adoption resource if the foster parents have been caring for the child for six months, rather than one year. [formerly at 4.13(15) now at 5.08(9)(b)]

*Specific requirements for the foster parent applicant assessment summary (homestudy) have been moved from policy into the regulations. [5.10(5)(d)]

* Agencies seeking to approve a foster home which is currently approved by another agency must enter into an interagency agreement with all other agencies approving the home regarding information sharing. [5.10(6)]

*The general foster parent agreement must include a statement describing state law and agency requirements regarding child rearing and discipline practices; and must include a statement requiring the foster parent to immediately notify a child's social worker of any concerns regarding a child's safety which arise during placement. [5.10(7)(a)4 & 11]

*The foster parent general agreement no longer requires the agency to provide insurance for the foster parents. Rather, the agreement must tell foster parents who is responsible for payment of damages. [formerly at 4.13(8)(a)14, now at 5.10(7)(a)13 & 14]

*The statements in the foster parent general agreement authorizing foster parents to obtain routine medical and dental and emergency medical care, and to approve special education plans have been eliminated. [formerly at 4.13(8)(a) 5 & 6, now addressed in child specific agreement only at 5.10(7)(b)14 & 15]

*The child specific placement agreement no longer requires that the foster parent be authorized to approve special education plans. The agreement must identify the person who is authorized to do so. [5.10(7)(b)15]

*The licensee must provide to foster parents prior to placement a description of any behavioral problems a child may have. [5.10(8)]

* The requirement of bi-monthly family resource worker visits to the foster home has been changed to quarterly visits. [5.10(11)(b)]

*The licensee must provide a mandatory on-going training program for foster parents. [5.10(13)]

*The annual review of foster parents must include consultation with each social worker involved with children in the home; reference to any services provided to the foster family on its own behalf; and a summary of the foster parents' participation in training. [5.10(14)]

*The licensee must assure that children in placement have reasonable access to communication through telephone and mail, which can be restricted only for therapeutic reasons, documented in the child's service plan. [5.11(1)]

*The timetables for provision of health care services have been removed in favor of reference to DPH policy. [formerly at 4.10(2), now at [5.11(4)a].

*Required follow-up contact has been limited to three months after termination of foster care or residential placement. [5.12(4)]

The following changes affect adoption programs:

*The Statement of Purpose must include a plan for the annual evaluation of services.
[5.04(1)(a)5]

* The regulations now explicitly require that the interagency agreement in adoption assign responsibility for the provision of all required services, including assessment, counseling, information on alternative plans for the child, service planning, placement, adoptive home evaluation, post-placement supervision, finalization and follow-up services. [5.08(5)(b)1]

*Medical and dental care required at placement may be provided up to one month after placement in international adoption. [5.08(13)(b)]

*Time frames have been established for the provision of certain (previously required) information to birthparents. [5.09(1 & 2)]

*A dollar amount maximum living expense for birthparents has been substituted for reference to the DPW Allowance. [5.09(3)(b)1]

*Payment for transportation in adoption must be reasonable, and not exceed local prevailing rates [5.09(3)(b)3]

*Payment of birthparent expenses incurred prior to completion of the intake evaluation is prohibited. [5.09(3)(h)]

* The picture of the child provided to adoptive parents in international adoptions must have been taken within three months of assignment, not placement. [5.10(9)]

*Upon request of a birthparent client, licensed foster care must be provided to any child prior to surrender [formerly in policy, now at 5.11(2)]

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

102 CMR 7.00 STANDARDS FOR THE LICENSURE OR APPROVAL OF GROUP DAY CARE AND SCHOOL AGE CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

GROUP DAY CARE PROGRAMS

Regulation review led us to the decision to combine the standards for Group Day Care and School Age Child Care. While recognizing that these programs serve children of different ages and developmental needs, many of the basic tenets of licensing (i.e. licensing procedures; parent rights, responsibilities, and information; required policies; enrollment procedures) were so similar that their combination seemed logical. In instances where the standards were inconsistent, discussions were held and in most cases, the higher standards prevailed. This combination should be especially helpful for those licensees that hold both a Group Day Care and a School Age Child Care license.

The regulations are formatted in three distinct sections. Section one details the requirements for both programs. Where there are differences, the rule is clearly marked for the specific program. Section two is just for group day care programs and section three just for school age programs.

The major changes that require revisions to required policies, procedures, and the physical plant are outlined below. Regional trainings, technical assistance sheets, and contact with your licenser will further clarify the changes.

The requirement for what needs to be submitted for renewal is now limited to copies of documents that have changed during the licensing period and copies of new inspection certificates. OFC retains the ability to request any document deemed necessary to renew the license. 7.03(3).

REGULATION	OLD REG	NEW REG	CHANGE
Financial documentation	none	7.06(7)	Programs must have a one-year projected operating budget
Attendance records	none	7.06(9) 7.06(5)	Programs must keep attendance records and maintain for 5 years
Maintenance of records	7.05(18)	7.06(5)	Personnel files and evacuation drill records must be maintained for 5 years.
Organizational info	7.05(7)	7.06(3)	Office for Children must be identified as the licensing authority.
Menus posted	7.08(1)	7.11(1)	Snacks must be posted with menus.
Staff evaluations	7.06(14)	7.08(4)(d)	The licensee must conduct annual written evaluation of staff members.
Contingency plans for natural disasters, loss of water, heat, power	none	7.24(2)(c)	The licensee must develop contingency plans and procedures to deal with natural disasters, loss of power, heat, or water.

The following policies will have to be updated because of changes in the new regulations:

POLICY	OLD REG	NEW REG	CHANGE NECESSARY
Personnel	7.06(7)c	7.06(6)	Add procedure for when a staff is accused of abuse or neglect
Health care policy	7.07(16)	7.05(1)	Add revised policies
Infection control	7.07(20)	7.05(6) (b)3 &(c)	Add procedures for universal precautions and how staff will be trained
Administration of medication	7.07(22)	7.05(2) (b)2b	Add statement that parent will be contacted before non-prescription medication is administered
Termination and suspension	7.10(4)	7.05(8)	Add suspension procedure.
Behavior management	7.07(14)	7.10(1)	Describe how, if "appropriate and feasible", children could participate in the establishment of rules, policies, and procedures

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

REGULATION	OLD REG	NEW REG	CHANGE
Lead screening	7.07(4) (c)	7.09(5) (a) 3&4	Children must be screened for lead poisoning once they turn 9 months and annually until they are 4
Staff medical exam	7.07(24)	7.08(1)	Newly hired staff now can have had a physical within one year prior to hire (instead of 6 mos).
First aid kits/emergency info on field trips	none	7.05(4) (e)	First aid kits and emergency information must be taken on every field trip.

OUTDOOR SPACE AND STAFF REQUIREMENTS

REGULATION	OLD REG	NEW REG	CHANGE
Regulations regarding outdoor play space and playgrounds .	7.11(5)	7.25(4)	Outdoor space cannot be covered with a dangerously harsh, abrasive, or toxic material. The ground area and fall zones under swings, slides, and climbing structures shall be covered with an adequate depth of an impact absorbing material. In programs serving infants and toddlers, pea gravel and wood chips that could be swallowed cannot be used.
Staff qualifications		7.21(2) (d) 1g 7.21(2) (c) 1g	A Department of Education Pre-K-3 Early Childhood Certificate is now an automatic qualifier for lead teacher - preschool. A Department of Public Health Early Intervention Specialist Certificate is now an automatic qualifieer for lead teacher - infant toddler.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

102 CMR 8.00 STANDARDS FOR THE LICENSURE OF FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES

The new Family Day Care regulations contain very few changes. The emphasis in revising the standards was to streamline and reorganize the individual rules into sections that made more sense. For example, where before there were 7 different supervision rules in as many sections, you will now find all the supervision rules in one place. All the information you need at the enrollment of a child is now in one list, as is the information that you must update annually.

Many of the changes reflect policy that is currently being enforced, so they may not appear to be new rules.

These are the changes:

Porches and Decks

1. Decks and porches may not be used by children until approved by the licensor.
2. The licensor will evaluate the deck or porch for safety based on the height from ground level, height of railing, ability of a child to climb over, under or through the barricade, and the sturdiness of construction.
3. The licensor will determine what precautions are necessary to make the deck or porch safe for use by children.

Change in Level

1. There must be a barrier at the entry to any stairway that is four or more steps.
2. Walkers or riding toys are allowed only in a room where there is a barrier to **any** change in level.

Hearths

Hearths that present a hazard to children must be padded or protected.

Emergency Information

Providers must take the following emergency information with them whenever they take the children off the premises: telephone number of the parents, emergency contact, source of health care, permission for emergency medical treatment, and permission for the administration of first aid and CPR. The new regulations expand the requirement to have money to make emergency telephone calls to allow the use of calling cards and cellular phones.

Please remember that you may have to make more than one phone call in an emergency (911, parents, emergency contacts, etc.)

Programmable Phones

Providers who have programmed emergency numbers into their telephones must post a list of the codes and what numbers they represent.

Smoking

If the provider, assistants, or household members smoke cigarettes, cigars, or pipes, the provider shall make this known in advance to parents who are considering placing their children in the provider's care.

Number of children in care.

The maximum number of day care children remains at 6 however some children under 16 will be allowed to be present without putting a provider over capacity. A child is defined as not participating in day care if he or she is 10 years of age or older, not enrolled in the day care and is there to visit only occasionally, and could be sent home immediately, if necessary. This would most likely be a friend of your own child who has come over to visit after school. In all cases, the provider is required to use good judgement in assessing the impact of extra children upon the regular day care program.

LARGE FAMILY DAY CARE REGULATION DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

What has happened so far?

On January 16, 1997, a LFDC Regulation Development Kickoff Meeting was held. Representatives from all areas of FDC were invited. Over 100 people attended. Gwen Morgan, Founding Director of the Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education, and Pauline Koch, Director of Licensing in Delaware facilitated the meeting. Small groups spent over 2.5 hours discussing issues such as supervision, infant ratios, qualifications, and training. All the comments, concerns, and ideas were collected at the end of the day and have been the basis for the first draft of the regulations.

Who will be developing the regulations?

A smaller workgroup of 15 people will meet on February 12, 1997 to start the work of regulation development. This group consists of providers, representatives from Child Care Resource and Referral agencies and systems, licensors, a representative from Wheelock College, and will be facilitated by Marcia Farris, OFC. This group plans to finish their task by the end of April.

What about the training the law requires before licensure?

At the same time, a group of training experts, providers, and licensing specialists are meeting to develop the "pre-service" training that is required by the law. This group will be working diligently to finish the curriculum and train the trainers by the end of April. Look for information from your Resource and Referral agency about this training, which should begin in May.

When will providers be able to start applying for LFDC?

The plan is to have the regulations ready for public hearing by the beginning of June and to have them promulgated by July. This would allow the Office to process applications and conduct visits during the summer months.

A pre-application for Large Family Day Care will be available to providers by the end of March. You may call your regional office and request to be put on the mailing list.

What is involved in the decision to do LFDC?

Deciding to make the move to large family day care is much more complicated than just taking in four more children. Hiring and supervising employees, dealing with the extra paperwork and expense this involves, dealing with four additional sets of parents and their issues, the wear and tear of four more children on the house and its furnishings, and just the increased noise level will be areas that will need to be explored. It may be a good idea to speak to someone who can explain the costs and recordkeeping involved in having an employee before making a decision to apply for a LFDC license.

How can providers give their ideas about the regulations?

During the regulation development process, you can send written comments to, or call Marcia Farris, Office for Children, One Ashburton Place, Boston, Mass. 02108, 617-727-8900, x158.

In June, you will be able to express your opinions of the LFDC regulations at Public Hearings.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

102 CMR 7.00 STANDARDS FOR THE LICENSURE OR APPROVAL OF GROUP DAY CARE AND SCHOOL AGE CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

SCHOOL AGE CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

When regulation review led to the conclusion that the GDC and SACC program regulations could be logically combined, it was important to be sure that the benefits to those programs holding both licenses would not out-weigh the impact on those free-standing programs. What was designed hopefully accomplishes the goals. For SACC programs, section one 7.00-7.12, and section three 7.30-7.36 are the regulations that you will need to pay attention to. As explained below, some of the wording may have changed, and the detail in the procedures may be more specific, but your current practice is probably very similar to the regulation language. Regional training by your OFC licensors will help clarify the changes.

These requirements are brand new for SACC:

A requirement that a first aid kit and emergency information on each child be taken on any field trip. 7.05(4)(d)

A requirement that the licensee develop contingency plans and procedures to deal with natural disasters, and loss of power, heat, or water. 7.24(2)(c)

These policies have always been required. When reviewing and combining the regulations, it was apparent that although there was more detail in the Group Day Care regulations, they reflected common practice. The new regulations reflect the Group Day Care wording, but do not add any more requirements.

Policy	New Reg. #	Old reg. #
Referral Policy	7.05 (7)	11.05(5)
Confidentiality and Distribution of Children's Records	7.04(8)	11.06(9)
Amending a Child's Record	7.04(9)	no reg
Behavior Management Policy	7.10(1)	11.05(6)
Orientation Plan	7.08(4)(b)	11.06(8)(f)

Several plans, policies, and procedures that are currently required in the SACC regulations have been added to the list of documentation that is to be part of the Health Care Policy 7.05(1) to be reviewed by the Health Care Consultant. All these plans were required before. These are:

Policy	New reg. #	Old reg. #
The procedure for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse or neglect	7.05(3)	11.06(12)
A plan for injury prevention	7.05(4)	11.04(6)
A plan for the management of infectious diseases	7.05(4)	11.04(7)(b)
A plan for monitoring compliance with infection control plans.	7.05(6)	11.04(8)(a)
A plan for evacuation	7.24(2)(b)	11.04(9)(c)

Other changes:

The list of required documentation for licensure has been standardized. Several required documents were in policy and not in the regulations. These were added to the list. There have been no additions to the requirements. 7.03(1)

The requirement for what needs to be submitted for renewal is now limited to copies of documents that have changed during the licensing period and copies of new inspection certificates. 7.03(3)

OFC retains the ability to request any document deemed necessary to renew the license.

In SACC, personnel policies were required even in programs with only one staff member. It has been changed to programs employing four or more staff members. 7.06(6) 11.06(8)

In SACC, a requirement that the licensee submit an annual statistical report to OFC has been deleted.

INCLUDING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN COMMUNITY SETTINGS

So what is inclusion anyway? It seems as if we hear the word a lot lately in public education and child care settings. Inclusion is the practice of serving all children together, regardless of their abilities. At first, child care providers had many concerns about meeting the needs of children with disabilities. However, exposure to kids with differences has calmed fears. Providers are rediscovering what they always knew; children with disabilities are first and foremost children, all of whom have the same needs for a stimulating, safe and nurturing environment. Providers who see children as individuals and plan a program according to their individual needs, strengths and interests can care for children with disabilities. High quality, developmentally appropriate programs are the right place for all children. In fact, providers usually only have to make minor adaptations to routines to successfully care for children with disabilities. This opens the door for all children to feel like they belong and can contribute.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Office for Children's regulations ensure that children with disabilities have access to child care in the community. The only acceptable reasons for denying admission are if enrolling the child would place an undue financial burden on the program or would fundamentally alter the nature of the program. Placement decisions must be made in consultation with parents. Parents must be informed of the outcome in writing and may appeal to the Office for Children.

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies offer technical assistance to providers to assist them in caring for all children. The CCR&R's are in contact

with community resources like early intervention programs and public schools, already working with the children.

Everyone benefits from inclusion. Children with disabilities interact with and learn from their typically developing peers. Typical children see the differences among people in positive ways in natural settings. They learn understanding and empathy much earlier than in the past. Families are seeing an end to the isolation they often experienced when their children were served in separate programs and classrooms. Child care providers have the opportunity to expand their skills as they care for all children and increase their professionalism.

In our next issue of Child Care Dialogue, we'll have information from a provider who has been successfully serving children with disabilities.

Providers in the Greater Boston Area may seek telephone and on-site technical assistance from Child Care 2000, the federally funded OFC project that helps parents obtain high quality inclusive child care. For more information call Peggie O'Hare at 617-727-8900, ext. 110.

ADOPTION STUDY COMMITTEE TO REVIEW OFC REGULATIONS

In the coming months, a committee representing diverse views from across the spectrum of adoption issues will review the Office for Children's adoption regulations. The review will be limited to adoptions facilitated by private adoption agencies. The purpose of the review is to determine if state regulations properly and reasonably regulate adoption or if they over-regulate and place obstacles in the way of timely adoptions. The committee will ultimately make a report on its findings.



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Office for Children

William F. Weld, Governor

Argeo Paul Cellucci, Lt. Governor

Joseph Gallant, Secretary

Ardith Wieworka , Commissioner

The Office for Children newsletter is published quarterly.

Doug Pizzi, Editor

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Dear Commissioner,

CHILD CARE DIALOGUE



A NEWSLETTER FOR CHILD CARE PROFESSIONALS

WINTER EDITION - 1998

OFFICE OF CHILD CARE SERVICES

VOL. 02

Leadership Group Thriving In Three Cities

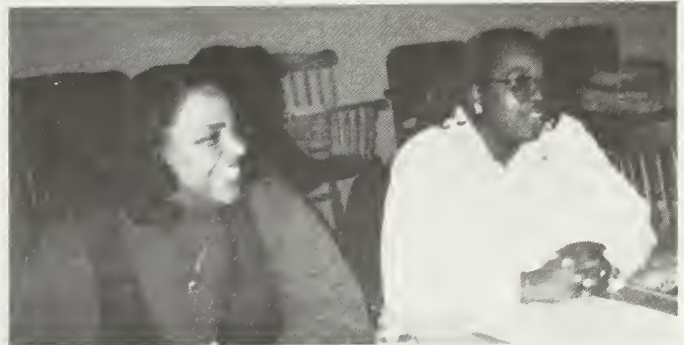
By Krista Almanzan

Long before the African American Leadership Initiative (AALI) came about, Marquerita Chisholm, President of Rita's Day Care, had been looking for allies in the child care community.

She found it difficult to find providers to whom she could relate her experiences, to whom she could turn for support. Today Chisholm no longer has this difficulty. Thanks to AALI, she has found other providers with whom she can network and communicate.

"I have been involved with the initiative since its inception...and I have had the opportunity to see the group size and enthusiasm grow," Chisholm said. "I enjoy the professionalism associated with my involvement with this group."

Now located in three Bay State cities, Boston, Brockton and Springfield, the initiative is a thriving leadership training organization. In fact, the leadership initiative has provided networking and training opportunities for many African American child care providers throughout Massachusetts. With an emphasis on training and professional development, members have run sessions on such timely subjects as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) prevention, playground safety and dealing with violence in the community. Additional training opportunities have been offered at full-day conferences conducted by the sectors. In June, Brockton will be holding a conference with workshops addressing the emotional effects on the child care provider



Juliana Brown King and Nadine Jones Ruffin at a recent AALI Boston meeting.

when a child leaves care, how to deal with children who have trouble fitting in within a child care setting and issues surrounding the presence of sex offenders in the community.

It all started in 1993, when a concerned group of African American family child care licensors joined together in the belief that the Office of Child Care Services, then the Office for Children, could do more to meet the needs of African American providers. Leading the way was Martha Roberts and E. Ginger Pruitt from the Boston regional office, Sandra Dillon, based in the Lakeville office, and Shirley Hudson, from the Springfield office. It was through their interest and discussions with colleagues that the AALI was established. Eventually, they decided to establish sectors in three of the Commonwealth's cities, Boston, Brockton and Springfield.

The first step in addressing these concerns was discovering the needs of the child care providers in their communities. In 1994 the groups conducted community

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Proposed Budget Good News

The January release of the Governor Cellucci's proposed Fiscal Year 1999 budget, commonly called House 1, bodes well for child care in the Commonwealth.

House 1 seeks to give OCCS an additional \$40 million to purchase 9,800 new child care slots for low income working families and those on welfare, a 15.6 percent increase in funding for the coming fiscal year.

This is a major initiative that doubles the pace of adding an average of 5,000 slots a year over the past three years. Of this proposed \$40 million, \$10 million will provide 3,200 slots for low income working families; \$12.5 million will provide 3,000 new slots to those just getting off welfare;

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COMMISSIONER'S CORNER: AN OPEN LETTER TO CHILD CARE PROVIDERS



ARDITH WIEWORKA
COMMISSIONER

Dear Child Care Professional:

There is much to tell you about since our last edition of Child Care Dialogue. The agency has accomplished a tremendous amount of work in a very short period of time.

Recently, the agency hired six new licensors to cope with the increased demand for child care, particularly the new large family child care license. At this writing, we have issued nearly 300 of these new capacity expanding licenses. We are also planning a work session to address the second part of the large family child care law, to allow certain large family licensees to care for up to two school age children without having to hire an approved assistant. Research shows that with the proper safeguards, providers can take on this added responsibility without compromising the quality of the care given to the younger children. The regulations we will draft will put these safeguards in place, and at the same time open up new, much needed capacity for school age children. It will also allow parents the choice of keeping younger and older siblings with the same provider. We have changed the way we license residential facilities for children, and developed the position of adoption licensing specialist (see Page 6).

With regard to this year's budget, which consolidated Human Services child care subsidy purchasing at OCCS, the agency successfully moved some 800 subsidized child care contracts from the Department of Social Services to OCCS, and in the process, had a 99 percent success rate in paying providers on time. We have received the Coopers and Lybrand report detailing recommendations for the child care system and are evaluating them. The agency, with the help of Executive Office of Administration and Finance, has assembled a procurement management team, which is busy crafting the specifications for the upcoming bid process for providers who wish to provide subsidized child care.

The Cellucci Administration's proposed budget for the coming fiscal year (see Page 1), gives us still more opportunities to make great strides toward increasing the amount of subsidized child care for people transitioning off of welfare, and toward elimination of the waiting list for low income working families who need child care.

All in all, it's a great time to be involved in this most important issue that has such a great impact on the quality of life we all hope to enjoy.

Sincerely,
Ardith

Supporting Providers Caring for Children with Challenging Behaviors: Child Care 2000

The most frequent need child care providers expressed to the Child Care 2000 staff is how to deal with children who demonstrate challenging behaviors. Child Care 2000 helps parents of children with disabilities access high quality, community based child care and helps providers make accommodations to care for these children.

Despite our project's interest in these issues, we want to stress that all children, not just those with disabilities, exhibit challenging behaviors at one time or another.

So what is behavior anyway? Basically, it is a person's reaction to the environment. It can be a reaction to a stimulus, either positive or negative. Children use behavior as a method of communication. Often it is their only means of imparting important information about their needs, feelings and reactions to the world around them. The first challenge for people caring for children is to be aware of this neutral definition, rather than assuming behavior implies negative actions or wrong doing. We must look at children's behaviors as valuable tools to better understand their needs.

The question then becomes, when does "normal, typical" behavior turn into challenging misbehavior? The most obvious answer is when a child's needs are not being met. This can occur when:

- A child is asked to perform tasks beyond her capabilities without adequate supports.
- She does not even understand what is expected of her.
- His feelings are not acknowledged or validated.

Continued on Page 7



Leadership Group Thriving

Continued from Page 1

forums to assess how OCCS could meet those needs. In Boston the focus was on family child care providers, Springfield focused on center based and family child care providers, and Brockton's forum included family child care providers and community leaders.

Work in different communities yielded different concerns. According to Hudson, one issue discussed at the Springfield forum was how to "provide quality child care within an economically depressed community." The Boston sector conducted two forums where Roberts, who is now manages the Boston regional office, discovered that providers wanted to receive training that they could use toward academic degrees, as well as training they could receive in their own community. Though the forums helped define many of their concerns, the AALI was still without focus.

Roberts brought focus to the initiative with a message from the National Black Child (NBCDI) Development Institute. In 1993

Roberts attended the NBCDI National Conference with the theme, "Paths to Leadership." Paths to Leadership centers around developing community leaders from existing community members. The key to this accomplishment is providing training and development opportunities in each community based on that community's specific needs.

With a new focus and the information gathered from the forums, the sectors set out to respond to the needs of their communities. All three sectors began conducting training sessions for their providers.

In addition to training efforts, the initiative also provides community outreach. Members have distributed clothes to shelters, created holiday food baskets and donated books to local libraries. Participating in activities and meetings conducted by the leadership initiative has meant a lot to providers, including Mary Cusick.

"I look forward every month to the opportunity of meeting with my peers, to discuss ways of bringing professional

recognition to the family child care provider community." Cusick wrote in a letter to Roberts. "But most of all, it is important to me to have the opportunity to discuss issues that are relevant to me."

The leadership initiative has continued to expand its efforts. In 1997 all three sectors held a statewide leadership conference. The keynote speaker was Evelyn Moore, President of the NBCDI. Moore encouraged the leadership initiative to focus on the vision of the NBCDI by becoming an affiliate. Soon there was a BCDI affiliate in Boston which worked with the sectors

to foster the national vision, "to improve and protect the quality of life of African American children and families." AALI members have recruited more than 70 new members for the Boston BCDI affiliate. Despite their national affiliations, the initiative maintains its community focus. Members meet monthly in order to network and share new ideas. According to most members, they live, eat and breath AALI. At the recent statewide

meeting on January 27, Roberts, now the Boston sector's chairperson; Pruitt, now retired from OCCS, but still a contributing member, Dillon, now OCCS Staff Administrator to the Brockton sector; and Hudson, now OCCS Staff Administrator to the Springfield sector, were joined by their colleagues Nadine Jones-Ruffin and Juliana Brown-King, Boston AALI co-chairs; and Ruth Littleton, Brockton sector chairperson.

The group discussed future goals and events for the February celebration of Black History Month.

Though they are already recognized as a resource, AALI aspires to develop a resume bank for qualified African-Americans in the early child care and education field. They would like to be in the position to refer these qualified candidates to employers in both the public and private sectors.

Members across the state look forward to continued success and growth as a vital leadership group within their local communities and the African-American community as a whole.

"I look forward every month to the opportunity of meeting with my peers, to discuss ways of bringing professional recognition to the family child care provider community."

- Mary Cusick -

Budget News

Continued from Page 1

\$12.3 million will provide 3,600 new slots to those on welfare or in job training programs; \$4.1 million will provide informal/relative care to people on public assistance; and \$1.1 million will go the resource and referral agencies to help administer consolidation.

On the licensing side of the ledger, House 1 fully funds OCCS' licensing budget with a \$300,000 increase in that account. That will annualize the six positions gained during the current fiscal year.

House 1 also fully funds Central Office's administrative accounts, maintaining the gains we made under consolidation, including the position of Budget Director that was and will be a key component of the agency's success.

The process now moves to the Legislature, where both branches will craft their own versions of the budget, rectify any differences in conference committee, then send the document along for the governor's consideration. When all is said and done, if House 1 is adopted by the House and Senate, it will be a cause for celebration among families and providers. With this budget, Massachusetts is demonstrating a commitment to working families, those who want to work and most importantly, to their children.



News in Brief

Ready, Set, Read

Last year the U.S. Department of Education launched the America Reads Challenge to help more children read well and independently by the end of the third grade. Now families, caregivers and others in your community can become part of this grassroots effort to improve reading and writing skills of America's youth.

Anyone interested in this project can get a free Ready, Set, Read kit that is full of creative materials you can use to further this goal. The kit comes with an activity guide you can use to help children learn about language through age appropriate activities. Also included is an Early Childhood Activity Calendar filled with helpful tips and activities to promote reading. Finally, the kit contains an Early Childhood Growth Chart to measure a child's height and language development. It gives age appropriate tips to promote language development.

You can obtain this material free of charge by calling 1-800-USA-Learn and follow the menu prompts for up to five kits at a time. You may also obtain this information on-line. Log on to the following web address: <http://www.ed.gov/inits/americareads/RSRkit.html>

School Age Conference

The Massachusetts School Age Coalition will hold it's first annual Building Bridges Conference on Saturday, May 16, Mass Bay Community College. The conference aims to support the work of school age child care professionals across the state and to promote and make visible the importance of school age care. To do this, the MSAC seeks to build bridges between parents and providers, school and after school programs, families, school age advocates, child oriented state agencies, communities and the business world.

The conference will be primarily a series of workshops around issues important to the school age community, and could include such topics as curriculum development, administration

Continued on page 5

Children and violence: You can do something

By Krista Almanzan

Children who witness violence on a daily basis are more the rule than the exception these days. For some children, the violence is real. They see it in their home or on their neighborhood streets. For most children, fortunately, the effects of the violence they see is mitigated because they only see it on television. In both cases, however, there can be long lasting effects on child growth and development. Yet there are ways for parents and child care providers to help heal the damage that has been done.

The *Child Witness to Violence Project* (CWVP), sponsored by the Boston Medical Center, offers free and confidential counseling and support for young children and their families who have been affected by violence. In a 1994 study by Betsy McAlister Groves, the Director of CWVP, she explains how the need for a project like CWVP arose.

"Both the discovery that so many children are witnessing significant violence and the assessments of the effects of this kind of exposure have provided the rational for establishing the Child Witness to Violence Project."

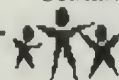
In 1991 Groves and her colleagues surveyed 115 mothers in the waiting room of Boston City Hospital's Pediatric Primary Care Clinic. They found that one in 10 children had witnessed a knifing or shooting by the age of six. An additional 18 percent of children under six had witnessed pushing, hitting or shoving. Half of the violence occurred on the streets and half in the home. Nine percent of mothers surveyed had been a victim of violence.

According to Groves, parents who are the victims of violence often underestimate the effect on the child witness because of personal denial. Many parents hold a false assumption that their children will forget traumatic events. This is hardly the case. Young children, even toddlers, can remember, reenact and speak about what they have seen. If parents don't pick up on this cue as a need for treatment, they may continue to allow their children to be witnesses to violence without knowing the true consequences.

Whether children witness a traumatic act of violence once or on a daily basis, they will be affected by what they have seen. Children may become fearful, moody, withdrawn and have trouble concentrating in school. In particular, children who witness domestic violence are at a high risk for suffering from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The key classification for young children who suffer from PTSD is a "foreshortened sense of the future." Domestic violence is particularly harmful because children are witnessing the people they trust and depend on for love being violated. The child becomes trapped between the aggressor (one parent) and the victim (the other parent); as a result, their home becomes their prison.

In order to help children in environments of recurrent violence and those who have only seen one traumatic event violence, the CWVP offers counseling for children seven years old and under. Ideally, counseling should be sought immediately after a violent incident. Another important criteria for those who receive counseling is that the entire family take part in therapy. In the *Harvard Mental Health Letter* Groves asserts, "treatment for the child should involve the family, because the trauma cannot be mastered until the family is stabilized and the parents feel safe." However, part of the project does include individual counseling to meet the personal needs of the parent and

Continued on next page



Children and Violence...

Continued from previous page
child.

The CWVP also offers training and consultation to professionals who work with children, including teachers, parents, social workers, attorneys and police. Staff trainers educate professionals on topics such as: post traumatic stress disorder in children, prevention strategies, talking to your kids about violence and the effects of media violence on children, to name a few.

Though the CWVP focuses on children who are eye witnesses to violence, they do not overlook the effect of media violence on children. The Office of Child Care Services has also acknowledged media violence as a significant problem. OCCS recently distributed 3000 pamphlets titled, *Help Children See Through Violence In The Media*, to Group Day Care providers in Massachusetts. The pamphlet gives child care providers, teachers, parents and children practical methods to help children differentiate between violence in the media and real life. It also gives tools for lobbying politicians, television programmers and toy manufacturers about dissatisfaction with violent shows and products.

Tax money in your pocket

People with low or moderate yearly incomes may be eligible to receive Earned Income Credit (EIC), a tax benefit that returns some or all of the income tax paid during the year.

Parents and child care staff members are qualified to receive an EIC if they meet one of the following three circumstances. First, workers who were raising one child in their home and had a family income of less than \$25,760 in 1997, can get an EIC of up to \$2,210. Second, workers who were raising more than one child in their home and had a family income of less than \$29,290 in 1997 can get an EIC of up to \$3,656. Finally, workers who were not raising children in their home, but were between the ages of 25 and 64 on December 31, 1997 and had an income below \$9,770 can get an EIC of up to \$332.

Marital and employment status are not factors when it comes to EIC eligibility. It is only necessary that the those requesting an EIC worked at some point during the tax filing year.

In order to find out more about the EIC, contact the IRS during business hours at 1-800-TAX-1040. Please help spread the word to parents and staff about this program.

Boston EQUIP awards grants

The Boston Early Education Quality Improvement Project (Boston EQUIP) has awarded some \$150,000 in grants to 55 applicants, including group day care and family child care providers, said EQUIP spokesman Jason Sachs.

"We were very excited about this program. The only disappointment is that we could not fund all 152 entries," Sachs said.

AT&T, the City of Boston and the Boston Enhanced Enterprise Community provided the funds for the program. Boston EQUIP is managed by Associated Day Care Services.

Successful applicants included the Ruggles/Mission Hill Day Care, which will increase parental participation in its program by offering parent/staff computer training. Some family child care providers will be using their grants to undertake such creative initiatives as starting a lending library for parents to borrow books to read to their children.

Centers received grants of up to \$5,000, while family provider grants were capped at \$1,000.

News in Brief

Continued from page 4

and management, behavior guidance and cultural diversity. For more information, call the conference hotline at 781-283-3452.

School Age Transport Regulation Amended

A glitch resulting from the combining of group day care regulations and school age child care regulations has been fixed by the agency. The end result is that it is not necessary for school age programs to have a bus monitor when more than eight children are being transported to or from a school age program. However, when transporting more than eight children to or from a group day care center, a bus monitor is needed.

License plates in April

The special "Invest in Children" license plate will be available on or about April 1. United Way and Success by Six have approved a marketing campaign for the new plate. Interest in the new plate appears to be high. The Legislation authorizing the new plate mandates that, after the Registry of Motor Vehicles recovers production costs, all funds raised from the plate go directly to the Child Care Quality Fund to be administered by the Office of Child Care Services. OCCS will give out child care quality improvement grants to nonprofit child care organizations. Look for the plate, it may be funding your grant.

Post your jobs free

If you have job openings at your licensed child care facility and you want to post them on the internet via the OCCS Home Page, you may now do so free of charge. Log on to the page at www.machildcare.com and click on the Help Wanted icon. Then click on the "post a position" hypertext and follow the instructions. It's quick. It's easy. And best of all, it's free.



Residential Licensing Changes

As we start off the new year, we have lots of news to tell you about what used to be called Substitute Care Licensing.

That's right, the program has a new name, "Residential and Placement Licensing." This licensing covers Group Care, Temporary Shelter, Transition to Independent Living, Foster Care and Adoption Licensing.

With that new name comes a new structure. Our staff of eleven Licensors report to two new supervisors, recently promoted from the licensing staff, Lucy Foran, in Lakeville, and Kelly Buckley, in Beverly. They report to the Director of Residential and Placement Licensing, David Michelson, based in our Springfield office.

We have also developed two adoption specialist positions. Beginning in March, Licensors Mike Curran and Kim McDowell will share responsibility for licensing all private (non-DSS) adoption programs. Focusing our resources in this way will enable our staff to develop greater expertise in adoption and better serve the adoption community.

As our new staff come on board and program assignments change, we will be in touch with you to let you know if you will be working with a new OCCS licensor.

We also have a new process for residential licensing. Two years ago, the agency began to seek ways to more efficiently and effectively use our resources to serve the children and providers through our licensing process. We surveyed all OCCS-licensed residential providers. We learned that providers would like to see OCCS licensors visit more often, particularly to provide technical assistance. Providers also expressed concerns about duplicative or conflicting requirements of various state licensing and contracting agencies. This issue is being addressed through an interagency Quality Measurement Committee, which OCCS co-chairs. We heard that our providers were interested in a licensing approach which was more closely tailored to the individual needs of programs.

So we designed a new process for residential licensing which we anticipate implementing in this March.

There are several features of the new licensing process which we want to tell you about, because they will affect you.

First, you will see your licensor more often. Rather than an intensive program study every two years, our new process will provide for a shortened licensing study process, and more frequent interim visits. Licensors will visit programs every six months to conduct "focus visits", tailored to the needs of individual programs. These visits, which may be unannounced, may focus on physical facility issues, behavior management, or any one of the ten areas defined as "modules" in our new licensing process. The length of time your licensor spends in your program for these focus visits will range from a few hours to a full day, depending on the nature of the focus visit and your particular circumstances. Your licensor will be available to provide technical assistance and to help you identify any potential problem areas.

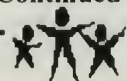
Second, as mentioned above, the license renewal study process will generally be shorter. Licensors will engage in fewer interviews than in the past, and fewer record reviews. To enable

licensors to evaluate your compliance with record keeping regulations, you will be asked to complete a pre-licensing audit of your records, and to document your audit on checklists provided to you by the Office. You will be asked to submit your completed record checklists to your licensor before the licensing study visit. You may want to save time in the process by including a plan to correct any shortcomings you have identified during your record audit. During the licensing study visit, the licensor will verify your audit by reviewing a small sample of your records.

Third, you will find that there are new, shorter time lines in the licensing process. You will receive your licensing study report more quickly than you may have in the past, and you will be expected to respond more quickly. Our goal is to provide the support that is needed for programs to achieve and maintain compliance. We want to work with you to resolve outstanding problems quickly.

First, you will see your licensor more often. Rather than an intensive program study every two years, our new process will provide for a shortened licensing study process, and more frequent interim visits.

Continued on next page



Residential Changes

Continued from previous page

Fourth, once established under the new licensing process, the month of your license renewal study will remain the same every two years. Regardless of your level of compliance or delays in responding to our reports, your license renewal study will be conducted every twenty-four (24) months. Delays in issuing your license will mean that the term of your license will be less than two years. To assist new programs, we have developed the "Guide to Plans and Policies for Residential Licensure." This document gives more information than can be provided in the regulations about exactly what various policies should include in order to be accepted by the Office. Existing programs and new program directors may also find this helpful when revising policies or developing policies to deal with new issues.

We have also built into our licensing process for new programs a site visit three months after the first license is issued. This will give us an opportunity to identify any course corrections that may be necessary before they become major problem areas.

As our new process is implemented, you will

find that some of our forms and documents have a new look, too. We have revised and standardized the forms we will use to make them clearer and easier for you, and for us. We have developed a policy order form, to inform you about topics on which we have more to say than is in the regulations, and enable you to obtain copies of those policies. And we have developed a new licensing study documentation form, which is available to you for the asking.

Of course, with all of these changes, we anticipate that there will be some adjustments that will need to be made, and questions may arise which we have not foreseen. We welcome your input during this time, and encourage you to discuss any questions you have with your licensor. You will receive ample opportunity to meet with us in each region to obtain copies of our new materials, review the new process, and answer any questions you may have.

We appreciate your patience as we all settle into a new name, a new structure, and a new licensing process, which will work to benefit our children in care.

Children with Challenging Behaviors...

Continued from Page 2

- He is in an environment that is not safe and nurturing.
- Her attempts and successes are not appreciated.
- Some major change in his life has occurred.
- Adults overlook or don't respond to earlier, more appropriate attempts to communicate concerns or discomfort.

As child care providers, what are some of the things we can do to respond positively and helpfully to children whose behavior is difficult? In general, when providers respect the children in their care and assume that their feelings are valid and come from some legitimate cause, there are a number of reasonably easy strategies to employ. Some might be:

- Directly asking the child what's up. (Give the child whatever tools he needs to answer, i.e., speech, sign language, pictures, etc.)
- Trying to figure out what the child wants to communicate, i.e., fear, pain, frustration, loneliness, etc.
- Looking for environmental triggers.
- Asking peers for insights.
- Periodically observing your space and program to assess if it is meeting children's needs.
- Honestly assessing one's own attitudes towards children.

It is important to respond to challenging behaviors proactively, not reactively. This means focusing on causes of "misbehavior", not just responding in a more knee-jerk fashion to the specific behavior. After determining what the cause of the behavior might be, develop a plan to address that cause, which in turn should eliminate the negative behavior. Try to use the least possible amount of intervention. Problem solve, don't blame, and empower the child to be part of the solution in a way that builds upon his strengths. Utilize your knowledge of child development, parent information, peers and outside resources to come up with creative ideas. Make sure your program has safe outlets for children to express their needs and feelings and that there is a good mix of activities which allow all children to participate and enjoy themselves.

There will still be some children you care for who exhibit difficult, challenging behaviors. However, if you try some of the strategies discussed, you will see positive changes in most of those children, as well as in the other children in your care, and in your own ability to meet the needs of diverse children.



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Ardith Wieworka, Commissioner

The Office of Child Care Service's Newsletter is Published Quarterly

Doug Pizzi, Editor

Dear Commissioner,

CHILD CARE DIALOGUE



A NEWSLETTER FOR CHILD CARE PROFESSIONALS

SUMMER EDITION - 1998 OFFICE OF CHILD CARE SERVICES

VOL. 03

Help a child every time you drive

By Erika Rydingsward

The new "Invest in Children" license plate can be seen on more and more vehicles these days all across the Bay State.

The brightly appointed plate, which features children's stick figure drawings and the "Invest in Children" slogan, currently sits on more than 1,300 vehicles. All of the proceeds from the plate, less the Registry of Motor Vehicle's costs, go directly to the Child Care Quality Fund for later distribution to not for profit child care organizations. The fund is administered by the Office of Child Care Services (OCCS).

"This is an excellent way for citizens, whether or not they use child care, to have a direct and positive impact on the quality of care for our children," said OCCS Commissioner Ardith Wieworka.

The new plate is the first in the nation designed solely to support child care. The Legislature passed the bill creating the plate and former Gov. William F. Weld signed it in 1996.

The Official launch of the "Invest in Children" license plate took place earlier this year on March 31 at the Commonwealth Children's Center at One Ashburton Place. Commissioner Wieworka, along with a number of state legislators, including State Sen. Warren Tolman, and State



Commissioner Ardith Wieworka displays her Invest in Children license plate

Rep. Kevin Fitzgerald, attended the event. Marian L. Heard, president and CEO of the United Way of Massachusetts Bay, served as master of ceremonies. Joining her was Charles K. Gifford, chairman and CEO of BankBoston and chair of the United Way's Success By 6 Leadership council.

The idea for the plate came from Success by 6 staff, organized by the United Way with help from two of the

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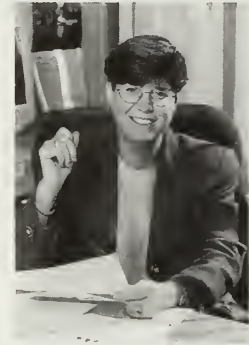
Don't use recalled, unsafe play yards and portable cribs

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is urging consumers to search for and stop using previously recalled child products, in particular the "Playskool Travel-Lite" portable crib, which was manufactured by Kolcraft from 1990 through 1992 and recalled in 1993. In May of 1998, a Chicago toddler died after a Playskool Travel-Lite portable crib collapsed.

Manufacturers of portable cribs and play yards are joining in the effort to warn consumers and child care providers to stop using the more than 1.5 million portable cribs and play yards that have been recalled in past years. Top rail hinges must be turned to set up the cribs and play yards. These top rails can collapse, entrapping children and suffocating them. Twelve children have died from suffocation in collapsed play yards and portable cribs manufactured

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COMMISSIONER'S CORNER: AN OPEN LETTER TO CHILD CARE PROVIDERS



ARDITH WIEWORKA
COMMISSIONER

Dear Child Care Professional:

It is my proud honor to tell you, if you have not already heard - it is, after all, baseball season so some media outlets may have missed it - that Massachusetts has once again been named one of the ten best child care states in the nation by WorkingMother Magazine.

This is the sixth year in a row that our state has won this distinguished honor, an unbroken string that began with the magazine's first child care survey (See Page 7). Of course, Massachusetts is no stranger to high honors and firsts when it comes to child care.

We recently became the first state in the nation to issue a special license plate, the entire proceeds of which go to improve child care. With the aptly named "Invest in Children" plate, citizens can make a direct investment in the quality of child care in the Commonwealth, and, of course, I would urge everyone with a vehicle to do just that.

In the coming weeks, we will be putting together a process to award the funds now being deposited in the Child Care Quality Fund set up by the legislation that created the plate (See Pages 1 and 3). According to the law, not-for-profit child care organizations are eligible to apply and we'll have more on that process in our next newsletter.

Also, we continue to move forward with child care consolidation, supported by large budget increases for the purpose of expanding child care subsidies for low income families and making the subsidy system easier to navigate for those directly affected by the state and federal policies, our families, and most particularly, our children.

All in all, with new federal investment in child care looming, a great economic climate and bipartisan support for child care here at home, it is a very exciting time to be involved in this most important issue. I thank all of you who have given OCCS your input, time and expertise to the benefit of our youngest citizens.

Sincerely,
Ardith

Child Care 2000 grant approved for two more years

Child Care 2000, a project to develop inclusionary models for child care for children with disabilities, completed its third year and has been refunded by the United States Department of Education for two more years. This second phase of the project will involve dissemination and replication of our model into all of the resource and referral agencies in Massachusetts. This model of Customized Services makes a variety of options available to families, child care providers and the community. These options can include finding and choosing child care, information about best practices in early care and education, home visits, telephone and on site technical assistance and facilitation and coordination of resources.

As we plan for the next two years, it is important to look at the accomplishments and outcomes of the first three. One of the most gratifying parts of our work has been getting to know the many child care providers in our state who have been and continue to care for children with a variety of disabilities. These providers opened their doors and their hearts to all children and made the early care and education system available to all, thereby enriching it. They have attended training and conferences, become valuable members of public school TEAMS, welcomed and learned from other professionals and made important contributions to children and families.

Some of our providers have been caring for children with diverse needs for many years. For others it is a new experience. All have displayed an understanding of the value of inclusion and a commitment to the well being of children and families that is impressive. We want to highlight just a few providers whose programs, attitudes and experiences represent the sort of people we have encountered.

Kudos and thanks to Susan in Cambridge who never met a child she couldn't accommodate. To Linda in Holliston who reserves half of her spaces for children with disabilities. To Diana in Lexington who always has at least two children with disabilities in her home. To Janet in Boston who never thought it mattered how children functioned, what mattered was that

Continued on Page 3



New license plate popular with motorists

Continued from Page 1

area's major banks, BankBoston and Fleet Bank of Massachusetts. Success by 6 is a program which strives to help ensure that children enter school healthy and ready to succeed by age six.

You can get this new plate for an initial investment of \$70, \$30 of which goes to the Registry to cover the cost of a new registration, with the balance going to the Quality Fund. After that, you can renew it every two years thereafter for \$40, all of which goes to the fund. The plate can be purchased on-line through the Registry of Motor Vehicles internet web site (<http://www.magnet.state.ma.us/rmv/express/plates.htm>) or at any full service Registry office.

Once the fund reaches a sizeable level, it's at about \$8,000 right now, OCCS will solicit applications for grants from the nonprofit child care providers across the state. Successful applicants will be able to use the money for quality improvements such as teacher training, training and education of consumers and parents, and specialized training for bilingual and bicultural providers. The funds will also be used in the purchase of learning materials and technical assistance for acquiring accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

The United Way of Massachusetts Bay authorized a total of \$125,000 to support a marketing campaign to get the word out about the plates. These funds have been used to market the license plate through print, radio, and television promotions.

The new license plates may also be seen in pamphlets, posters, on billboard advertisements and even in your mail.

In fact, the United Way is currently undertaking a mailing of promotional materials to nearly 3,000 child care providers in the state.

According to Carmen Fields, the Communications Director of United Way of Boston, these marketing tactics are really paying off because there are inquiries about the plate daily and the brochures are flying out of registry offices.

"We have been getting calls requesting more posters and extra pam-

phlets. There is a definite interest in the new plate," Fields said.

WCVB, Channel 5, is doing its part by letting Bay State residents know what they can do to help the cause of child care. Starting in April, the station initiated a campaign to promote the plate by running 10 second, 15 second, 30 second, and 1 minute public service announcements regularly. This will continue for the next two years, Fields said.

"We have been getting calls requesting more posters and extra pamphlets. There is a definite interest in the new plate," Fields said.

Child Care 2000 funding approved for two more years

Continued from Page 2

they were children who needed care. To Pat in Springfield who said, "Sure I can learn how to do tube feeding." To Ana in Lawrence who learned to sign. To Judith in Waltham who said, "A cardiac monitor, why not?" To Dave in Brockton who said, "A finger stick every four hours, that's no big deal." To Kitty in Cambridge who said, "Just send them, I'll figure out how to meet their needs." To Faith in Peabody who makes it her business to find out what resources are out there for families.

We could cite many, many more of you, but because there are only a few pages available for all the child care news, we extend a heartfelt "Thank you," to all of our providers who are doing such a wonderful, important job for children with disabilities and their families. We will continue to call on you. We will also work to increase your opportunities for training and support through the resource and referral agencies in our state.

Volunteer to help OCCS develop license plate grant criteria

As you have read in the accompanying story, the Child Care Quality fund is off and running at an excellent pace. Now OCCS will develop a fair system of soliciting grant proposals under the legislation that created the special Invest in Children license plate.

In order to do that, we need your help. OCCS is seeking volunteers to meet a few times over the coming months. This group will develop criteria for grant submissions, an evaluation tool to rank proposals and set up a system to make the awards. The size of the group will be determined somewhat by the level of interest.

In order to take part, you cannot be connected with a potential recipient of a grant from the fund. Under the legislation, only nonprofit child care organizations may seek these funds. Also, people who have grant writing experience will be especially valuable, but you need not have this in your background to apply.

If you can help, please send your name, affiliation and at least two ways to contact you, to Doug Pizzi, Communications Director, Office of Child Care Services, One Ashburton Place, Room 1105, Boston, MA 02108, or e-mail dpizzi@state.ma.us, or telephone at 617-626-2060.



News in Brief

Two OCCS offices relocate

Since our last edition, two of the OCCS regional offices have relocated. First, in March, the Region 2 office, which handles Central Massachusetts, moved from Worcester to Westboro. The address is 180 Turnpike Road, Westboro, MA 01581. To reach the office by phone, dial 508-871-7181. The fax number is 508-871-7190.

Most recently, in June, the OCCS Region 6 office, which handles the Greater Boston area, moved from downtown Boston to Quincy. The new address is 50 Ross Way, Quincy, MA 02169. The telephone number is 617-472-2881. The fax number is 617-472-2722.

Reducing the risk of SIDS

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), with the help of the Maternal and Child Health Bureau and other Federal agencies, has launched the "Back to Sleep" campaign to raise awareness of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is the major private partner, along with the SIDS Alliance and the Association of SIDS and Infant Mortality Programs.

The campaign is appropriately named, as its main recommendation is to place healthy infants on their backs to sleep, rather than on their tummies. Following this recommendation has been shown to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Prior to the campaign, 70 percent of infants were sleeping on their stomachs; now only 21 percent slumber on their stomachs. Unexplained SIDS deaths have also dropped from 5,000 to 3,000 in the United States since the campaign.

The NICHD feels that it is imperative that this message reach all caretakers, including fathers, grandparents and baby-sitters. To request "Back to Sleep" pamphlets, posters and videos, please call 1-800-505-CRIB, or write to: Back to Sleep Campaign, 31 Center Drive, Room 2A32,

Continued on page 5

Stop using recalled, dangerous play yards and portable cribs

Continued from Page 1

by various firms. Current production play yards have top rails that automatically lock into place when the play yards are fully set up.

"We urge consumers to make an all out effort to search their homes and daycare centers for these portable cribs and play yards and stop using them," said CPSC Chairman Ann Brown.

The Playskool Travel-Lite portable cribs have two nylon mesh sides and two blue solid plastic ends. "Playskool" appears in white letters on a red background on each end. The portable crib folds in the center for storage and handling. Stores nationwide sold 11,600 of the products from 1990 through 1992.

Kolcraft has gone to great lengths to renew their recall efforts. Kolcraft is offering a \$60 refund to consumers for the return of the Travel-Lite portable cribs. They also are notifying pediatricians and child care providers about the recall. Consumers should call Kolcraft at (800) 453-7673 for instructions on disposing of the products and receiving the refund.

A number of portable cribs and play yards manufactured by other companies also have been recalled because of the risk of suffocation posed by collapsing top rails. Consumers and child care providers should check for the following recalled play yards and portable cribs. If these products are found, consumers should call the company.

The following are the firm and product names, the date they were recalled, the numbers/dates sold and the remedy:

Evenflo: Happy Camper, Happy Cabana, and Kiddie Camper Portable Play Yards; recalled on 6/25/97; 1.2 million units sold between 1990 and 1997; Free hinge covers offered. Call firm at 800-447-9178.

Century: Fold-N-Go Models 10-710 and 10-810, Portable Play Yards; recalled on 11/21/96; 212,000 units sold between 1993 and 1996; Free repair offered; Call firm at 800-541-0264.

Draco: All Our Kids (models 742 and 762) Portable Cribs/Play Yards; recalled on 11/21/96; 13,000 units sold between 1992 and 1995; Stop use and destroy (Firm out of business).

Baby Trend: Home and Roam and Baby Express Portable Cribs/PlayPens manufactured before 1995; recalled on 1/1/95; 100,000 units sold between 1992 and 1994; Free repair offered; Call firm at 800-328-7363.

CPSC is asking the help of consumers, child care providers and child welfare associations to help spread the word about the search for these portable cribs and play yards in an effort to avoid another tragic incident.

"CPSC gets recalled products off store shelves, but we can't go into consumers' homes and remove the products," said Brown. "That's why we want to get this message out and have consumers act immediately to prevent another tragedy."

Before using any used nursery equipment, even if it has been used for a sibling, consumers should check the recalled product lists, available 24-hours-a-day, through the CPSC hotline at (800) 638-2772 or through the CPSC web site at www.cpsc.gov.



New Family Child Care Plus available: See your Licensor

Regulations for a third type of family child care license went into effect on July 24. The primary feature of the Family Child Care Plus (FCCP) license is that qualified providers may enroll up to two school-age children on a part-time basis without hiring an assistant. This is in addition to the six children already allowed with a regular family child care license.

The new license joins the regular family child care (FCC) license, with an enrollment cap of six children. Also available is the large family child care (LFCC) license, which allows for up to 10 children to be in the home. An assistant must be present when more than six children are in the home.

"The new Family Child Care Plus license gives both parents and providers that much more flexibility in making child care choices," said Office of Child Care Services (OCCS) Commissioner Ardith Wieworka.

Commissioner Wieworka noted that the option to enroll part-time school-age children will allow many parents to keep their younger and school-age siblings together with the same provider. The new license will also free up more full-time slots for providers, who may now be able to take on part-time school-age children without sacrificing full-time slots for younger children.

Family Child Care Plus is the second new family child care program developed by OCCS in as many years. Most recently, the office began offering the LFCC license. To date, the agency has issued about 400 of these licenses.

Based on early inquiries about Family Child Care Plus, OCCS officials expect these licenses to be in heavy demand as well, especially as the back to school season approaches.

To some extent, Large Family Child Care and Family Child Care Plus are related. When the Legislature passed the Large Family Child Care Law in 1996, it directed the Office to develop a program to allow providers to enroll part-time school age children without meeting all of the large family requirements. With the large family license successfully implemented, OCCS began developing the Family Child Care Plus regulations in much the same way it had for large family license, by seeking as much input as possible for the entire child care community.

After a well attended regulation development kick-off session, similar to the one held for large family child care, OCCS and other stake holders began crafting the regulations for the new FCCP license.

Those seeking the new license must have a minimum of two years of full-time experience as a family child care provider or approved assistant, or must have one year of that experience combined with at least one year of full-time experience caring for unrelated children in a group setting.

Providers must attend a three-hour orientation session. Also, during the three-year duration of the license, providers must take 20 hours of OCCS approved training, three of which must be specific to infants and toddlers, and two of which must be specific to school-age children.

There are other requirements as well, especially surrounding how and when providers must count their own children in figuring their maximum capacity, especially for the summer months. In addition, there are some requirements around indoor and outdoor space. Providers interested in this new license should check with their licensors.

Also, if you already have a Large Family Child Care license, you are automatically approved to provide Family Child Care Plus services. Again, however, you should check with your licensor to determine your maximum capacity and your ability to meet other requirements.

News in Brief

Continued from page 4

Bethesda, MD 20892-2425

Trust Fund TV takes off

The Children's Trust Fund (CTF) announces a new partnership with the Massachusetts Corporation for Educational Telecommunication. Their first project will be a new three-part interactive series called Parent-Infant Interactions: Promoting Positive Relationships. Live sessions will be broadcast via satellite across the state on three consecutive Wednesdays in October: October 7, 14, and 21 from 4-4:50 p.m. The series explores the topics of parent-infant interaction, demonstrates infant assessment techniques that engage parents, and investigates early brain and language development and activities to promote early literacy. CTF and MCET welcome early childhood educators, child care providers, and parents to participate in this exciting new series, building relationships between providers, families, and infants. The registration deadline for the series is September 11th, and a program guide for this and other MCET programs is available by calling 617-252-5700. You may also get further information by logging on to the MCET web site at www.mcet.edu.

Web page use on the rise

Those of you who have seen our web page (www.machildcare.com) recently have noticed several recent upgrades with a better organized, more interactive and more user friendly new layout. The message board section has also been expanded so those who log on can voice their opinions on a whole range of issues. Along with those changes comes an increase in use of the page by the general public. Web administrator Mark Tyrrell reports that the page is getting some 2,000 "hits" a day. Tyrrell termed that response, "overwhelming, since it's a relatively new site."



New child care technology system in development

On July 12, some 70 people from all corners of the child care community joined the Office of Child Care Services (OCCS) in West Boylston to begin the exciting task of crafting a brand new computer system. The system will streamline the entire process of applying for, using and administering child care subsidies.

Those who attended formed the core group which will staff two important committees: a Steering Committee to look at the so-called "big picture," for the new system - what do we want it to do - and a Design/Implementation Team to develop and build the new system.

"It was very well organized and extremely helpful to hear what will be happening" said Joanne Gravell, program director of Family Services of Central Massachusetts.

Gravell added that it will be important to make sure as the process continues that the focus remains on parents and their needs.

"We don't want to gear the focus away from the goal, which is (to help) parents," she said.

Elaine Fersh, director of Parents United for Child Care also stressed the importance of aiding parents, both in their efforts to initially access the system, and then to negotiate through it.

"A big issue is making sure parents are included and know how to use the system," she said.

OCCS Commissioner Ardith Wieworka termed the meeting a success.

"We're off to a great start with this most important project. We have a diverse group of people including providers, administrators, resource and referral experts and others to help us craft this new initiative."

As part of the budget consolidation of the child care system enacted by the Legislature in Fiscal year 1997, OCCS was charged with looking at technological solutions to make it easier for families to access child care subsidies. Also part of the consolidation was a mandate to make OCCS's administration of the child care system, primarily eligibility determination, billing and data collection, including the waitlist data, more efficient.

To that end, in June, OCCS hired Systems Engineering Inc., (SEI), of Waltham, to help build this new system. To date, project representatives have visited scores of child care providers, administrators, family child care systems and other organizations in an effort to better understand existing business practices to see what

commonalities already exist across various programs and answer several important questions. What are the snags that child care providers and families currently encounter? Which parts of intake and eligibility determination seem to get bogged down and need to be streamlined? What should the links be between resource and referral agencies and providers? What are the goals around management of the waitlist for subsidized care?

After consultation with numerous people in the child care field, Commissioner Wieworka decided to do more than just poll the affected organizations. So in a June letter to more than 300 contracted providers, professional organizations and other stakeholders in the child care system the Commissioner invited participation in the process to develop the system that will keep Massachusetts on the vanguard of the child care world.

Many have already volunteered to serve on the two committees that will develop the new computer system to take the Commonwealth's child care system into the new millennium.

OCCS initially received almost 100 responses combined for both the Steering Committee and the Design/Implementation Team.

The Steering Committee, the larger of the two groups will look at broad based questions regarding what parents, providers and others want and need out of a system like the one we're going to build.

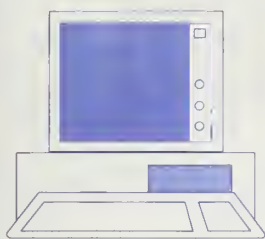
Following the guidelines from that committee, the design and implementation team will actually design the system and write the software. Once this task is completed, OCCS will train providers and others to use the software and provide technical support and troubleshooting services.

This new computer system and attendant software will help streamline the process so that, for example, a parent seeking information about eligibility for a child care subsidy will be able to learn about all of the programs potentially available in any one of a number of ways, including visits to centers, resource and referral agencies, through the internet or via a toll-free telephone number. In the past, parents often had to visit or call various sites to learn about, and get an eligibility determination for, the various child care programs offered by the Commonwealth.

"We want each point of entry into the system to be a point of access to the entire system," noted Commissioner Wieworka. "Parents seeking child care should not have to go to two, three or more sources to get all of the information they need when they are making that all important decision of who will be caring for their children."



Around the web SBA financial help



Around the Web is a new feature in Child Care Dialogue. Each time it appears we'll point out web sites that focus on children and children's issues. This month we're going to focus on child safety.

There are a number of sites on the world wide web devoted to children and child safety. One of the premier sites in this area is that of the National SAFE KIDS Campaign. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has recognized the National SAFE KIDS Campaign, headquartered in Washington D.C., for its outstanding efforts to increase public awareness about child safety.

SAFE KIDS is now celebrating, along with its 245 state and local affiliates, 10 years of working to protect children through research, public awareness, safety device distribution, establishment and enforcement of law and grassroots partnerships.

The National SAFE KIDS Campaign is the first nonprofit organization to receive the CPSC's Chairman's Commendation. The commendation was awarded on the basis of actions that contribute to reducing hazards to children, voluntary actions that are far beyond government regulations, developments affecting people's general safety, improvements to existing products and safety devices, packaging, warnings, or products which heighten consumer safety.

The web site (www.safekids.org) offers fact sheets, answers to safety questions and links to other web sites.

Other web sites aimed at child safety include the Injury Control Resource Information Network (www.injurycontrol.com/icrin). The site is sponsored by the Allegheny University of Health Sciences. This site has statistical, research, coalition, government agency and other information related to injury prevention.

The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (see story on Page 1) has a web site that features, among other things, product recalls ordered by the commission. The OCCS Home Page (www.machildcare.com) has a direct link to the CPSC's web site through the "Exciting Links" icon, or you can get there directly (www.cpsc.gov).

If you're looking for information about playground safety, log on to the National Program for Playground Safety's web site (www.uni.edu/playground). This site, hosted by the University of Northern Iowa's College of Education is chock full of information on safety at the playground and general injury prevention.

You can find other sites by using one of the various search engines, Alta Vista, for example, and entering the keywords "injury+prevention." Using the + sign between the words links the words to give you sites with both words.

If you are an existing licensed for-profit child care provider, in-home or center based, or if you wish to be, you may be able to take advantage the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Region I Child Care Initiative.

Developed in cooperation with the Office of Child Care Services (OCCS), the Child Care Initiative owners who want to start or expand their businesses, but who are unable to get loans directly from a financial institution, access financing through loan guaranty programs and intermediaries.

Other services available to providers through this program include assistance in business and financial needs analyses, business plan preparation, insurance needs assessment and growth needs assessment. Through cooperation with OCCS, the program also offers help to businesses to help them comply with state licensing requirements.

In addition, the SBA can put you in touch with a number of organizations aimed at the small business owner such as:

- SCORE, the Service Core of Retired Executives, where volunteers who have been in business offer counseling on business growth and start-up;
- SBDC, Small Business

Development Centers, cooperative efforts between the SBA and the academic community, private sector and state and local governments that offer help with business planning and loan application;

- CWE, Center for Women & Enterprise, Inc., a not-for-profit business educational organization aimed at assisting women starting or expanding a business.

For further information about these or any other SBA offerings, contact Lisa Gonzalez at the SBA by calling (617) 565-5590. You may also get more information by visiting the agency's web site at www.sba.gov.



Mass. Child Care in Top Ten

For the sixth year in a row, WorkingMother Magazine has named Massachusetts as one of the ten best states in the nation for child care.

The Bay State has earned this designation each year the magazine has done its survey. The survey measures four variables, quality, safety, availability and commitment. Massachusetts received four stars out of a possible four stars in each of those categories.

The magazine lauded the Commonwealth for boosting programs for prekindergarten and school-age children, increased funding for the Community Partnerships school readiness program and increased funding for subsidies for low income working families.



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Office of Child Care Services

Argeo Paul Cellucci, Governor

William O'Leary, Secretary

Ardith Wieworka, Commissioner

The Office of Child Care Services' Newsletter is Published Quarterly

Doug Pizzi, Editor

Dear Commissioner,



CHILD CARE DIALOGUE



A NEWSLETTER FOR CHILD CARE PROFESSIONALS

WINTER EDITION - 98/99 OFFICE OF CHILD CARE SERVICES

VOL. 04

School-age care increases across the Commonwealth

By Erika Rydingsward

As children entered school again in the fall, many parents who might have had to ask themselves where their children would be after school, didn't have to pose that question.

At the end of November, there were 749 OCCS licensed school age programs operating in the Commonwealth, and another 51 applications pending. More than 50 of these new programs, representing more than 2,300 slots, have come on-line since June. Over the last four years, the number of programs has increased by more than half, and capacity has climbed some 70 percent.

In addition, two other initiatives, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services' (EOHHS) Targeted Cities initiative, and the city of Boston's 2-6 Initiative, promise to bring even more after school care programs into existence in the coming months.

"Right now, school age child care is growing faster than any other type of child care," noted OCCS Commissioner Ardith Wieworka. "Parents, care givers and public officials all realize that keeping children engaged and active between the time school gets out and the time parents get home from work is a great dose of preventive medicine for so many of the problems kids in this age group have."

The latest research on juvenile crime, teen pregnancy and substance abuse show a marked increase in these



READING TIME - Lincoln Extended Day students enjoy reading with Site Coordinator Angela Tino.

troubling and destructive behaviors between the hours of two and six in the afternoon. If children are learning to use computers, playing sports, and encouraged in a positive way while being supervised, they are much less likely to engage in behavior that is destructive to themselves and others, research shows.

Thus, this research, combined with an economy that is creating more and more jobs, is driving the rapid growth of school-age care. The growth is happening across a wide

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Help available for capital improvements

Child care facility operators sometimes face greater hurdles than some other businesses when it comes to financing capital improvements.

Fortunately, there are state sponsored programs and public/private partnerships that providers can use to either finance a project, or, get other benefits such as a reduced tax burden, once a project is completed. The key is, however, to get the right people involved from the planning stages so you can evaluate your options.

The Child Care Capital Investment Fund is probably the best known of these programs. Administered by the Community Economic Development Assistance Corp. (CEDAC). The fund provides loans and technical assistance

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COMMISSIONER'S CORNER: AN OPEN LETTER TO CHILD CARE PROVIDERS



ARDITH WIEWORKA
COMMISSIONER

It has been a time of great changes at our agency, and I know change is never easy. The ripples from changes we have gone through together have meant changes for all of you in the provider community.

Probably the biggest change for providers of direct and indirect child care services has been the recontracting process for income eligible child care subsidies and resource and referral services.

As many of you already know, in August we awarded new contracts for income eligible child care to 246 providers, 33 of which are new to the system. The budget contained \$13 million in expansion money which will allow us to provide some 12,000 slots, an increase of nearly 2,400 slots.

Also, when this edition went to press, we had awarded new resource and referral contracts for all but one area of the state. And the process for Region 4 is well on the way to completion. These contracts will allow all of us to better manage services we deliver to some of the state's most needy families and help them on the path to self sufficiency.

I'm not overstating the case when I say that these contracts are the very foundation of what we all can now proudly call the consolidated child care system. For while we still have a lot of work to do, we can all take great pleasure in having started out at one point and having arrived in a better place for Massachusetts children and families, and that's who were all here for when all is said and done.

So I want to thank all of you for your support through these most exciting and most challenging times. We have made very real progress that will greatly improve the lives of the families we serve and you should all congratulate yourselves for that. I look forward to your continued help in making the Massachusetts child care system second to none.

Sincerely,

Ardith

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES BEING SERVED IN FAMILY CHILD CARE

Increasingly, families whose children have disabilities are seeking to place them in family child care homes. The smaller numbers, home-like atmosphere, greater flexibility and potential for a close and supportive relationship with the provider is very appealing. Another benefit of inclusion in FCC homes for families, is that the same place can meet the needs of more than one of their children. Parents are eager to place their child who has a disability in the same program where a sibling is being cared for.

FCC providers are responding very positively to including children with diverse abilities. They are used to accommodating children's different needs because they generally care for a mixed age group of children. It is quite usual to find an infant, a toddler, a preschooler and a ten year old all in the same home. Therefore, when a provider enrolls a five year old girl who is developmentally delayed and functioning at a two year old level, she has the knowledge, materials, time and experience to work with that child, fostering skills that are developmentally appropriate albeit not chronologically typical.

FCC providers are enrolling children with a variety of disabilities. Children with autism, hearing loss, diabetes, cerebral palsy, attention deficit disorder and Down Syndrome are in family child care homes. Children who need feeding tubes, use wheelchairs, are on cardiac monitors or are severely depressed can be found in these homes as well. Occasionally, even the most experienced provider encounters a child that she needs some support to successfully include. In such a situation the first resource is of course the child's parents. Families learn to do whatever their child needs at home. They can share their knowledge with providers, teaching them how to care for their child. Many children with disabilities receive services from other sources such as early intervention programs, public school systems, hospitals and mental health providers. With parental permission, these specialists will often come into a FCC home and work with providers to learn the necessary skills required to care for specific children.

Another important resource for child care providers is their local child care resource and referral agency (CCR&R).

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School-age programs grow in size and numbers

Continued from Page 1

spectrum. In addition to brand new programs being started, some programs are expanding to larger locations. In the Boston area, some individuals who provided license-exempt programs in their homes, have had such demand that they decided to find new locations and become licensed.

These programs are also expanding the activities within their facilities. The focus is no longer just providing a place for kids to go and do homework. Sports and computers are now very popular activities geared toward keeping the children active and involved. Some programs offer activities such as weekly scheduled swimming trips and on some occasions there are even specialists brought in to conduct activities.

As one of the first states in the nation to develop standards and begin licensing school age child care a decade ago, Massachusetts has a long-standing interest and expertise in this type of child care. So it came as no surprise when the state developed and implemented the Targeted Cities Initiative with a large school age child care component.

Between 1995 and 2005, Massachusetts will experience a 24 percent increase in adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17. Unless city, state, and federal agencies develop more effective approaches to these teens, this population increase could result in 700 more arrests for violent crimes, 1,000 more teen pregnancies, and 4,000 more high school drop outs. In addition, most of this population and crime increase will occur in cities.

EOHHS used mapping software to identify cities, down to the neighborhood level, where disproportionate increases in this population combines with high risk factors like poverty. This analysis yielded the eleven Targeted Cities where the increase in teen pregnancies, drug use, violent crimes and high school drop out rates are expected to be the highest. The eleven cities are Boston, Brockton, Fall River, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Springfield and Worcester.

The initiative focuses state and community resources on these high risk neighborhoods through collaboration among federal, state and municipal agencies and community leaders. The Legislature appropriated \$3 million into the FY '99 budget, which will now be used to help generate local matching funds to identify the risk factors facing teens and create services to address them.

One of the top priorities for the Initiative is to provide high quality after school services. EOHHS is committed to provide funding, through OCCS, to increase quality school age child care in the targeted cities. With that commitment in mind, EOHHS and OCCS last October sponsored a day-long conference by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time for city officials and people from community agencies in the eleven cities, as well as staff from state agencies, including EOHHS, OCCS, departments of Social Services, Public Health, Education, Youth Services and Housing and Community Development.

In future months, OCCS will be working with other agencies and the targeted cities to provide technical assistance on licensing and funding issues and to identify space that could be suitable for school age child care.

In the city of Boston, Mayor Thomas Menino is pursuing the 2-6 initiative, aimed at ensuring every school age child in the city has access to high quality, affordable safe and fun after school opportunities.

The program has many goals, among them raising public awareness about the positive impact quality after school programming can have on the healthy development of children. Those working on the initiative are building a city-wide infrastructure around such issues as technical assistance and transportation, to name a few items.

The city now has more than 40 operational programs in the schools, 13 of them new since September. The next step, already under way, is to expand the offerings to non-school facilities.

Revere program typical of need

Lincoln Extended Day, a school-age program at the Lincoln School in Revere, opened on September 1 at its full capacity of 56 children.

Three months later, the program, the only one in a Revere school, had a waiting list of 55 children, according to Debbie Kneeland.

Kneeland is the administrative director of For Kids Only, a 15-year-old private, nonprofit which runs three school-age programs in Winthrop and Revere.

"I stopped taking names when the waiting list was reaching our enrollment," Kneeland said during a recent tour of the facility.

Knowing there was a need out there, Kneeland and her colleagues approached city officials, who agreed to let For Kids Only start the program.

Kneeland used \$6,000 in start-up money she received via her OCCS contract and money from the United Way's Child Care Investment Fund (see "**capital improvements**" on Page 1), to build out the space for the new program.

For Kids Only was eligible for the start-up money because the program has an OCCS contract to offer 20 subsidized child care slots to income eligible families. Ten of the slots are new expansion slots.

Kneeland, who also serves as the public policy Coordinator for the Massachusetts School-Age Coalition, said she could easily fill another program if she had the space.



News in Brief Financing help available

OCCS Thanks Providers

This past Fall the Office mailed questionnaires to providers, who, during the first six months of this year had serious and emergency investigations conducted by OCCS investigators and licensing staff. The questionnaire solicited feedback regarding our investigation process beginning with the initial contact by an OCCS representative through to the issuance of the investigation report.

The comments underscored an issue of importance to the Office; that of issuing investigation reports in a timely manner. The Office is continually reviewing its process in order to ensure consistency throughout all investigations. We strive for efficiency without sacrificing thoroughness. We are in the process of modifying our internal review process and streamlining the written report so that the timeliness issue is addressed.

The Office wishes to thank those providers who responded to the questionnaire. We welcome your continued feedback.

License plate grant report

The volunteer committee developing criteria to disburse money from the Child Care Quality Fund will soon make recommendations to the OCCS Child Care Advisory Committee, which will forward final recommendations to OCCS.

The volunteers have had several meetings have picked training, education, career development and classroom materials as the primary areas upon which to focus grant awards, which are limited to non-profit child care organizations.

Meanwhile, more than 3,700 motorists have purchased the "Invest in Children" license plate since the plate went on sale last April, pumping nearly \$75,000 into the Child Care Quality Fund.

The plate is sponsored by the Massachusetts Bay United Way and Success by Six.

News briefs continued on page 5

Continued from Page 1

to non-profit child care providers. Providers must have 501(c)(3) non profit status, be licensed by OCCS or be in the process of obtaining a license and also have at least 30 percent of their client families categorized as low income. The maximum loan for qualified applicants is \$300,000.

For further information, contact the fund in care of CEDAC by calling Dan Violi or Bronia Clifton at (617) 727-5944.

The Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD) has the Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP) in 34 economic target areas across the Commonwealth. Under that program, any project in the target areas that is creating new jobs may be eligible to participate. While applicants are limited to for-profit companies, non-profit centers leasing space from a for-profit entity may also qualify with participation of the landlord.

Benefits to participants include the special tax assessment, a partial or total exemption from local property taxes, and tax increment financing. Under these programs, the local municipality must be a party to any agreement. Also available to for profit owner/operators is a five percent credit against state income taxes. Finally, for those who choose to renovate an abandoned building (at least 75 percent vacant for previous two years), there is a 10 percent abandoned building tax deduction.

To learn whether your proposed project may be in an economic target area and for further information contact MOBD at (800) 5 CAPITAL.

The Massachusetts Development Finance Agency, or MassDevelopment, also has programs some child care providers may find attractive. The predevelopment assistance program can provide up to \$25,000 in matching funds for work that has to be done before development, such as preparation of land, infrastructure and roadways before actual construction begins. If the project goes forward, the money is paid back via a low interest loan. If the project does not go forward, the MassDevelopment funds become a grant.

On large projects (\$1 million and up) being done by 501(c)(3) non-profit corporations, MassDevelopment offers a tax exempt municipal bond program. For profit entities may be able to take advantage of loan guarantee and bridge financing programs.

For further information on these or other MassDevelopment offerings, call 800 (445) 8030 or visit the agency on the web at www.massdevelopment.com.

Children with disabilities

Continued from Page 2

CCR&Rs support providers through telephone consultation and technical assistance. They can refer providers to additional resources in the community, for example helping them locate an adaptive swing for outdoor play, or facilitating the building of a ramp as a community service project by a high school carpentry class. Some of our CCR&Rs in Massachusetts are also able to offer on-site technical assistance to FCC homes. A specialist from the CCR&R can come to the home to help plan modifications to the environment or curriculum that allow children to succeed. They can problem solve issues with providers and help them develop strategies to meet individual children's needs. For providers who are not sure which CCR&R can assist them in their inclusion efforts, a call to OCCS will give the information. Providers - keep up the good work. Children and families rely on you and appreciate your efforts.



Spanish-American Union promotes family child care leadership

A growing group of Springfield providers has been moving to improve the quality of child care while promoting and informing the Latino community. The Latino Family Child Care Provider's Association (LFCCPA) was started less than a year ago, but has been very proactive in the child care community.

Last January, two different support groups for child care providers, previously unknown to each other, came together under the auspices of the Spanish American Union to form the LFCCPA. The "Proveedoras Unidas" group and "Proveedoras En Accion" group both joined together to advocate professional development and to face other issues regarding child care and the Latino community. To further this goal, the SAU submitted a grant proposal to the Wheelock College Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education's "Taking the Lead" program.

"Taking the Lead" is a national initiative which awards three-year project funding to promote leadership among child care workers. The SAU proposal was one of only ten projects awarded nationwide.

There are currently 35 active members in the association, which is



LEADERS - Nelida Torres, Moraima Mendoza, Carmen Santana, Flora Rivera and Yolanda Cotto at a recent LFCCPA meeting.

composed of a group of "existing leaders" and "emerging leaders". The existing leaders are those who originally came together to form the LFCCPA. Others are from the ranks of the child care and education profession, such as Iris Crespo, an OCCS Family Child Care licenser. The emerging leaders are newer members of the association. There are now more than 25 Latino Family Child Care Providers in the Greater Springfield area in the emerging leaders group.

The association is divided into four committees and each committee is working on individual projects to inform and educate parents as well as providers and potential providers. The Professional Development Committee is organizing and establishing parent/child education projects and offering courses like a Pre-G.E.D. course, computer courses and a Child Growth & Development course taught in Spanish through the Union.

The Child Advocacy Committee is trying to put together developmental workshops to improve quality child care, while the Parent

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News in Brief

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Background checks for informal providers coming

OCCS will soon be conducting criminal record offender information (CORI) background checks on non-relative informal child care providers.

Those found to have disqualifying backgrounds will be barred from becoming informal child care providers.

Under the federally mandated in-home/relative provider program, these providers are paid a stipend to care for a relative's or friend's child while the parent participates in a job training program or works. The program is primarily used by those transitioning from welfare to work. It is particularly popular with those working non-traditional hours and those who have transportation issues. This voucher program came to OCCS with Child Care Consolidation in the Fiscal 1998 budget.

In December, OCCS sought and won approval from the Criminal History Systems Board, which oversees all CORI checks, to begin doing background checks on this group of providers. The checks will begin during this fiscal year.

CPSC recalls playpens

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has announced the voluntary recall of more than 9.6 million play yards and play pens with protruding rivets because they pose a strangulation risk. The playpens being recalled carry the brand names Bilt-Rite, Evenflow, Gerry, Graco, Kolcraft, Playskool, Pride-Trimble and Strolee.

Toddlers can strangle in these playpens if pacifier strings or clothing catches on the protruding rivets. Since 1983, CPSC has received eight reports of toddlers who strangled in this way.

Consumers should check the top rails of their playpens for these protruding metal rivets, which stick out one-quarter to one-half inch from the outside top rails. The rivets are similar to nut and bolt fasteners but can not be removed.



Around the web

OCCS building new web page

OCCS has launched a new home page and related links, which can be reached by pointing your browser to **www.qualitychildcare.org**. The new site became necessary when OCCS and the webmaster of the former web site, **www.machildcare.com**, agreed to sever the relationship. That site is now run as a private entity.

Meanwhile, **qualitychildcare.org** will include two new search engines. One will allow parents to perform their search for child care on-line. The other will offer the ability to search for any word or phrase within the site itself, which will be particularly useful for providers who log on to get updates or do research on regulations. Other features on the site will include a section on OCCS Teacher Qualification, child care regulations, criminal offender record information (CORI) application information and all other news of interest to the child care community from OCCS or other sources. The new page will also contain a link to the Registry of Motor Vehicles, so anyone wishing to purchase the "Invest in Children" license plate will be able to do so on-line.

As we move toward the new century, the use of the internet will be crucial to go along with the rest of our new technology system (see related story on this page).

The new web page will be integrated with the new technology system so providers and parents will be able to conduct more and more business over the web.

Cool sites for kids

If you're looking for some other sites that are great for kids, point your browser to The Scholastic News site (**www.scholastic.com**). This site has on-line versions, arranged by grade, of the popular Scholastic News magazines many kids have in school. It's a great way to keep current on current events. It also has a link to a page for fans of the popular books, The Animorphs, which Scholastic publishes.

Another interesting site for kids can be found at the home page of TTLC Internet's Kids Page (**http://ttlc.net/kids.htm**). This page has links to several child oriented pages including Time Magazine Kids, Sports Illustrated for Kids, Crayola Crayon's home page and a homework help site.

System update

Integrated Child Care Information System

OCCS is continuing to develop the Child Care Information System that began in June thanks to \$1 million technology appropriation from the Secretary of Administration and Finance.

The new system, which is being developed jointly by OCCS and Systems Engineering Inc. (SEI), will affect all aspects of the child care subsidy programs. A major feature of the system will be the replacement of outdated existing systems and the addition of automation to previously paper-based systems. This will be a great help to providers, agencies, and especially helpful to parents who want to check on waitlist spots as well as income eligible child care subsidy voucher availability.

In October, the design team made up of child care providers, OCCS staff and others, began to develop the system.

When completed, the system will accelerate the child care referral and placement process, subsidy eligibility determination, waitlist monitoring and billing. Parents and providers will be able to check and see where they are on the waitlist, do an initial eligibility determination on-line and be able to log on and get a list of all providers who accept vouchers, just to name a few features.

Since the system will have a customer base of hundreds of contracted providers, the child care Resource and Referral agencies and the thousands of voucher providers, customer review and approval is essential for system success. Therefore, since the design team has developed simple prototypes for child care referral and placement, the team has gone out to gather customer reactions and review of the actual project. This has been done primarily through prototype demonstration projects throughout the state.

"Actually, the team has learned valuable information at every meeting where the project has been reviewed," said Joe Guido, the SEI consultant and project director. "When users see our demonstrations on how the system will work, they often offer us great insight on what systems need to be added or clarified. So we feel these reviews are invaluable to the overall success of the project."

A complete prototype is expected to be ready during this half of the fiscal year. Ultimately, the system will be integrated with the new OCCS web page, **qualitychildcare.org**.



OCCS, DPH working together to support early intervention

OCCS and the Department of Public Health have a long history of working together to provide services to infants and toddlers at both the local and state levels.

Most recently, Phil Baimas, OCCS Director of Special Projects, has been working closely with Karen Welford, Director of Early Intervention Field Services at the Department of Public Health, to better coordinate their agencies' roles in working with Early Intervention programs.

Early Intervention is a family-centered program for children up to age three, who have a variety of risk factors. If risk factors are present, a child may be referred, with parental consent, to an Early Intervention program for screening and to determine eligibility.

Early Intervention is designed to minimize the effect of physical and mental disabilities in children before they enter the school system. This is done by providing developmental, therapeutic and preventive services based on each family's priorities and goals as outlined in an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP). Children and their families receive services through several models including in the child's home, at an early intervention program or in another community setting.

All Early Intervention programs must meet DPH operating standards and many center-based programs must also possess an OCCS group day care license. Thus, both agencies are working to strengthen communication, delineate comparative areas of responsibility and design joint training programs.

One of the first collaborative steps was to compare OCCS regulations and DPH operating standards for early intervention programs. Although the two sets of requirements differed and at times appeared to conflict with each other, the review also identified many similarities. OCCS and DPH then made sure important health and safety requirements were reflected in both agencies' standards and analyzed differing requirements to arrive at a common understanding of their intent. Additional areas such as

program administration, staff qualifications, and transportation have also been addressed.

Because the regional offices of OCCS and DPH are co-located in Lakeville, OCCS licenser Anne Moniz of Region 5 and DPH Early Intervention Specialist Patti Fougere have known each other for several years. This project gave them the opportunity to work together in conducting joint visits to Early Intervention programs and other OCCS licensed infant/toddler programs to see how each agency applies their requirements in the field.

"It was very interesting to see how DPH applied their standards because many run parallel with our policies. It is exciting that our two agencies are sharing information; it's been really valuable," Moniz commented when asked about working closely with DPH.

The emphasis that both agencies place on sound early childhood practice includes providing Early Intervention services in the child's natural environment. For some families this means children might receive Early Intervention services in a family child care home or a child care center.

In July, the Cape Cod Child Development program, which also provides Early Intervention services to infants and toddlers on the Cape and the Islands, took the initiative to host an informational meeting on integrating Early Intervention children into natural environments. Both Anne Moniz from OCCS and Patti Fougere from DPH attended the discussion and answered many questions about Early Intervention services and licensing requirements. Anne and Patti are now working to identify more child care settings that may be able to meet the needs of infants and toddlers requiring these important services.

Child care resource and referral agencies in other parts of the state have provided workshops to discuss Early Intervention. If you are interested in more information, please contact your local resource and referral agency.

Spanish-American leadership program on the move

Continued from Page 5

Advocacy Committee is finding out what parents want out of child care and trying to put together Spanish literature for Latino parents. Finally the Leadership Committee is busy training emerging leaders via mentoring with existing family child care providers.

Moriama Mendoza, the Taking the Lead project coordinator from the Spanish-American Union, said that the people in the Latino Family Child Care Provider's Association are very eager to learn. Apparently they are also eager to share.

Last November, four emerging leaders, two existing leaders and Marcia Farris, formerly of OCCS and now with

Wheelock, attended the National Association of Education for Young Children's (NAEYC) conference in Toronto. They attended to showcase all of the Taking the Lead projects, to share opinions and ideas, discuss site work with different directors and leaders and meet with advisors and funders.

Although they have been in existence for only 11 months, participants have done an amazing job in promoting leadership among child care providers, Crespo said. With the help and support from Wheelock, the Latino community has been able to go out and help providers, parents, and most importantly, the children, according to Crespo.

For more information, call Moriama Mendoza at (413) 734-7381 or Iris Crespo at (413) 788-8401.



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Dear Commissioner,



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